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THE WORKS OF HENRY FIELDING

EDITED BY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOL. VI.

TOM JONES

VOL. IV.

First Edition 1893
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His Lordship advancing towards her made a low bow.

His Lordship advancing towards her made a low bow.

THE HISTORY OF TOM JONES A FOUNDLING BY HENRY FIELDING ESQ

VOL. IV.

EDITED BY GEORGE SAINTSBURY WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HERBERT RAILTON & E. J. WHEELER.

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BOOK XIV.—*continued.*

Chapter iv.

Which we hope will be very attentively perused by young people of both sexes.

PARTRIDGE had no sooner left Mr Jones than Mr Nightingale, with whom he had now contracted a great intimacy, came to him, and, after a short salutation, said, "So, Tom, I hear you had company very late last night. Upon my soul you are a happy fellow, who have not been in town above a fortnight, and can keep chairs waiting at your door till two in the morning." He then ran on with much commonplace raillery of the same kind, till Jones at last interrupted him, saying, "I suppose you have received all this information from Mrs Miller, who hath been up here a little while ago to give me warning. The good woman is afraid, it seems, of the reputation of her daughters." "Oh! she is wonderfully nice," says Nightingale, "upon that account; if you remember, she would not let Nancy go with us to the

masquerade." "Nay, upon my honour, I think she's in the right of it," says Jones: "however, I have taken her at her word, and have sent Partridge to look for another lodging." "If you will," says Nightingale, "we may, I believe, be again together; for, to tell you a secret, which I desire you won't mention in the family, I intend to quit the house to-day." "What, hath Mrs Miller given you warning too, my friend?" cries Jones. "No," answered the other; "but the rooms are not convenient enough. Besides, I am grown weary of this part of the town. I want to be nearer the places of diversion; so I am going to Pall-mall." "And do you intend to make a secret of your going away?" said Jones. "I promise you," answered Nightingale, "I don't intend to bilk my lodgings; but I have a private reason for not taking a formal leave." "Not so private," answered Jones; "I promise you, I have seen it ever since the second day of my coming to the house. Here will be some wet eyes on your departure. Poor Nancy, I pity her, faith! Indeed, Jack, you have played the fool with that girl. You have given her a longing, which I am afraid nothing will ever cure her of." Nightingale answered, "What the devil would you have me do? would you have me marry her to cure her?" "No," answered Jones, "I would not have had you make love to her, as you have often done in my presence. I have been astonished at the blindness of her mother in never seeing it." "Pugh, see it!" cries Nightingale. "What the devil should she see?" "Why, see," said Jones, "that you have made her daughter distractedly in love with you. The poor girl cannot conceal it a moment; her eyes are never off from you, and she always colours every time you come into the room. Indeed, I pity her heartily; for she seems to be one of the best-natured and honestest of

human creatures." "And so," answered Nightingale, "according to your doctrine, one must not amuse oneself by any common gallantries with women, for fear they should fall in love with us." "Indeed, Jack," said Jones, "you wilfully misunderstand me; I do not fancy women are so apt to fall in love; but you have gone far beyond common gallantries." "What, do you suppose," says Nightingale, "that we have been a-bed together?" "No, upon my honour," answered Jones, very seriously, "I do not suppose so ill of you; nay, I will go farther, I do not imagine you have laid a regular premeditated scheme for the destruction of the quiet of a poor little creature, or have even foreseen the consequence: for I am sure thou art a very good-natured fellow; and such a one can never be guilty of a cruelty of that kind; but at the same time you have pleased your own vanity, without considering that this poor girl was made a sacrifice to it; and while you have had no design but of amusing an idle hour, you have actually given her reason to flatter herself that you had the most serious designs in her favour. Prithee, Jack, answer me honestly; to what have tended all those elegant and luscious descriptions of happiness arising from violent and mutual fondness? all those warm professions of tenderness, and generous disinterested love? Did you imagine she would not apply them? or, speak ingenuously, did not you intend she should?" "Upon my soul, Tom," cries Nightingale, "I did not think this was in thee. Thou wilt make an admirable parson. So I suppose you would not go to bed to Nancy now, if she would let you?" "No," cries Jones, "may I be d—n'd if I would." "Tom, Tom," answered Nightingale, "last night; remember last night——

> When every eye was closed, and the pale moon,
> And silent stars, shone conscious of the theft."

"Lookee, Mr Nightingale," said Jones, "I am no canting hypocrite, nor do I pretend to the gift of chastity, more than my neighbours. I have been guilty with women, I own it; but am not conscious that I have ever injured any.—Nor would I, to procure pleasure to myself, be knowingly the cause of misery to any human being."

"Well, well," said Nightingale, "I believe you, and I am convinced you acquit me of any such thing."

"I do, from my heart," answered Jones, "of having debauched the girl, but not from having gained her affections."

"If I have," said Nightingale, "I am sorry for it; but time and absence will soon wear off such impressions. It is a receipt I must take myself; for, to confess the truth to you—I never liked any girl half so much in my whole life; but I must let you into the whole secret, Tom. My father hath provided a match for me with a woman I never saw; and she is now coming to town, in order for me to make my addresses to her."

At these words Jones burst into a loud fit of laughter; when Nightingale cried—"Nay, prithee, don't turn me into ridicule. The devil take me if I am not half mad about this matter! my poor Nancy! Oh! Jones, Jones, I wish I had a fortune in my own possession."

"I heartily wish you had," cries Jones; "for, if this be the case, I sincerely pity you both; but surely you don't intend to go away without taking your leave of her?"

"I would not," answered Nightingale, "undergo the pain of taking leave, for ten thousand pounds; besides, I am convinced, instead of answering any good purpose, it would only serve to inflame my poor Nancy the more. I beg, therefore, you would not mention a word of it to-day, and in the evening, or to-morrow morning, I intend to depart."

Jones promised he would not; and said, upon reflection, he thought, as he had determined and was obliged to leave her, he took the most prudent method. He then told Nightingale he should be very glad to lodge in the same house with him; and it was accordingly agreed between them, that Nightingale should procure him either the ground floor, or the two pair of stairs; for the young gentleman himself was to occupy that which was between them.

This Nightingale, of whom we shall be presently obliged to say a little more, was in the ordinary transactions of life a man of strict honour, and, what is more rare among young gentlemen of the town, one of strict honesty too; yet in affairs of love he was somewhat loose in his morals; not that he was even here as void of principle as gentlemen sometimes are, and oftener affect to be; but it is certain he had been guilty of some indefensible treachery to women, and had, in a certain mystery, called making love, practised many deceits, which, if he had used in trade, he would have been counted the greatest villain upon earth.

But as the world, I know not well for what reason, agree to see this treachery in a better light, he was so far from being ashamed of his iniquities of this kind, that he gloried in them, and would often boast of his skill in gaining of women, and his triumphs over their hearts, for which he had before this time received some rebukes from Jones, who always exprest great bitterness against any misbehaviour to the fair part of the species, who, if considered, he said, as they ought to be, in the light of the dearest friends, were to be cultivated, honoured, and caressed with the utmost love and tenderness; but, if regarded as enemies, were a conquest of which a man ought rather to be ashamed than to value himself upon it.

Chapter v.

A short account of the history of Mrs Miller.

JONES this day eat a pretty good dinner for a sick man, that is to say, the larger half of a shoulder of mutton. In the afternoon he received an invitation from Mrs Miller to drink tea; for that good woman, having learnt, either by means of Partridge, or by some other means natural or supernatural, that he had a connexion with Mr Allworthy, could not endure the thoughts of parting with him in an angry manner.

Jones accepted the invitation; and no sooner was the tea-kettle removed, and the girls sent out of the room, than the widow, without much preface, began as follows: "Well, there are very surprizing things happen in this world; but certainly it is a wonderful business that I should have a relation of Mr Allworthy in my house, and never know anything of the matter. Alas! sir, you little imagine what a friend that best of gentlemen hath been to me and mine. Yes, sir, I am not ashamed to own it; it is owing to his goodness that I did not long since perish for want, and leave my poor little wretches, two destitute, helpless, friendless orphans, to the care, or rather to the cruelty, of the world.

"You must know, sir, though I am now reduced to get my living by letting lodgings, I was born and bred a gentlewoman. My father was an officer of the army, and died in a considerable rank: but he lived up to his pay; and, as that expired with him, his family, at his death, became beggars. We were three sisters. One of us had the good luck to die soon after of the small-pox; a lady was so kind as to take the second out of charity, as she said, to wait upon her. The mother of this lady had been a servant to my grand-

mother; and, having inherited a vast fortune from her father, which he had got by pawnbroking, was married to a gentleman of great estate and fashion. She used my sister so barbarously, often upbraiding her with her birth and poverty, calling her in derision a gentlewoman, that I believe she at length broke the heart of the poor girl. In short, she likewise died within a twelvemonth after my father. Fortune thought proper to provide better for me, and within a month from his decease I was married to a clergyman, who had been my lover a long time before, and who had been very ill used by my father on that account: for though my poor father could not give any of us a shilling, yet he bred us up as delicately, considered us, and would have had us consider ourselves, as highly as if we had been the richest heiresses. But my dear husband forgot all this usage, and the moment we were become fatherless he immediately renewed his addresses to me so warmly, that I, who always liked, and now more than ever esteemed him, soon complied. Five years did I live in a state of perfect happiness with that best of men, till at last—Oh! cruel! cruel fortune, that ever separated us, that deprived me of the kindest of husbands and my poor girls of the tenderest parent.—O my poor girls! you never knew the blessing which ye lost.—I am ashamed, Mr Jones, of this womanish weakness; but I shall never mention him without tears." "I ought rather, madam," said Jones, "to be ashamed that I do not accompany you." "Well, sir," continued she, "I was now left a second time in a much worse condition than before; besides the terrible affliction I was to encounter, I had now two children to provide for; and was, if possible, more pennyless than ever; when that great, that good, that glorious man, Mr Allworthy, who had some little acquaintance with my husband, accidentally heard of my distress, and im-

mediately writ this letter to me. Here, sir, here it is; I put it into my pocket to shew it you. This is the letter, sir; I must and will read it to you.

"'MADAM,

"'I heartily condole with you on your late grievous loss, which your own good sense, and the excellent lessons you must have learnt from the worthiest of men, will better enable you to bear than any advice which I am capable of giving. Nor have I any doubt that you, whom I have heard to be the tenderest of mothers, will suffer any immoderate indulgence of grief to prevent you from discharging your duty to those poor infants, who now alone stand in need of your tenderness.

"'However, as you must be supposed at present to be incapable of much worldly consideration, you will pardon my having ordered a person to wait on you, and to pay you twenty guineas, which I beg you will accept till I have the pleasure of seeing you, and believe me to be, madam, &c.'

"This letter, sir, I received within a fortnight after the irreparable loss I have mentioned; and within a fortnight afterwards, Mr Allworthy—the blessed Mr Allworthy, came to pay me a visit, when he placed me in the house where you now see me, gave me a large sum of money to furnish it, and settled an annuity of £50 a-year upon me, which I have constantly received ever since. Judge, then, Mr Jones, in what regard I must hold a benefactor, to whom I owe the preservation of my life, and of those dear children, for whose sake alone my life is valuable. Do not, therefore, think me impertinent, Mr Jones (since I must esteem one for whom I know Mr Allworthy hath so much value), if I beg you not to converse with these wicked women. You are a young gentleman, and do

not know half their artful wiles. Do not be angry with me, sir, for what I said upon account of my house; you must be sensible it would be the ruin of my poor dear girls. Besides, sir, you cannot but be acquainted that Mr Allworthy himself would never forgive my conniving at such matters, and particularly with you."

"Upon my word, madam," said Jones, "you need make no farther apology; nor do I in the least take anything ill you have said; but give me leave, as no one can have more value than myself for Mr Allworthy, to deliver you from one mistake, which, perhaps, would not be altogether for his honour; I do assure you, I am no relation of his."

"Alas! sir," answered she, "I know you are not, I know very well who you are; for Mr Allworthy hath told me all; but I do assure you, had you been twenty times his son, he could not have expressed more regard for you than he hath often expressed in my presence. You need not be ashamed, sir, of what you are; I promise you no good person will esteem you the less on that account. No, Mr Jones, the words 'dishonourable birth' are nonsense, as my dear, dear husband used to say, unless the word 'dishonourable' be applied to the parents; for the children can derive no real dishonour from an act of which they are intirely innocent."

Here Jones heaved a deep sigh, and then said, "Since I perceive, madam, you really do know me, and Mr Allworthy hath thought proper to mention my name to you; and since you have been so explicit with me as to your own affairs, I will acquaint you with some more circumstances concerning myself." And these Mrs Miller having expressed great desire and curiosity to hear, he began and related to her his whole history, without once mentioning the name of Sophia.

There is a kind of sympathy in honest minds, by means of which they give an easy credit to each other. Mrs Miller believed all which Jones told her to be true, and exprest much pity and concern for him. She was beginning to comment on the story, but Jones interrupted her; for, as the hour of assignation now drew nigh, he began to stipulate for a second interview with the lady that evening, which he promised should be the last at her house; swearing, at the same time, that she was one of great distinction, and that nothing but what was intirely innocent was to pass between them; and I do firmly believe he intended to keep his word.

Mrs Miller was at length prevailed on, and Jones departed to his chamber, where he sat alone till twelve o'clock, but no Lady Bellaston appeared.

As we have said that this lady had a great affection for Jones, and as it must have appeared that she really had so, the reader may perhaps wonder at the first failure of her appointment, as she apprehended him to be confined by sickness, a season when friendship seems most to require such visits. This behaviour, therefore, in the lady, may, by some, be condemned as unnatural; but that is not our fault; for our business is only to record truth.

Chapter vi.

Containing a scene which we doubt not will affect all our readers.

MR Jones closed not his eyes during all the former part of the night; not owing to any uneasiness which he conceived at being disappointed by Lady Bellaston; nor was Sophia herself, though most

of his waking hours were justly to be charged to her account, the present cause of dispelling his slumbers. In fact, poor Jones was one of the best-natured fellows alive, and had all that weakness which is called compassion, and which distinguishes this imperfect character from that noble firmness of mind, which rolls a man, as it were, within himself, and like a polished bowl, enables him to run through the world without being once stopped by the calamities which happen to others. He could not help, therefore, compassionating the situation of poor Nancy, whose love for Mr Nightingale seemed to him so apparent, that he was astonished at the blindness of her mother, who had more than once, the preceding evening, remarked to him the great change in the temper of her daughter, "who from being," she said, "one of the liveliest, merriest girls in the world, was, on a sudden, become all gloom and melancholy."

Sleep, however, at length got the better of all resistance; and now, as if he had already been a deity, as the antients imagined, and an offended one too, he seemed to enjoy his dear-bought conquest.—To speak simply, and without any metaphor, Mr Jones slept till eleven the next morning, and would, perhaps, have continued in the same quiet situation much longer, had not a violent uproar awakened him.

Partridge was now summoned, who, being asked what was the matter, answered, "That there was a dreadful hurricane below-stairs; that Miss Nancy was in fits; and that the other sister, and the mother, were both crying and lamenting over her." Jones expressed much concern at this news; which Partridge endeavoured to relieve, by saying, with a smile, "he fancied the young lady was in no danger of death; for that Susan" (which was the name of the maid) "had given him to understand, it was nothing more

than a common affair. In short," said he, "Miss Nancy hath had a mind to be as wise as her mother; that's all; she was a little hungry, it seems, and so sat down to dinner before grace was said; and so there is a child coming for the Foundling Hospital."—— "Prithee, leave thy stupid jesting," cries Jones. "Is the misery of these poor wretches a subject of mirth? Go immediately to Mrs Miller, and tell her I beg leave—Stay, you will make some blunder; I will go myself; for she desired me to breakfast with her." He then rose and dressed himself as fast as he could; and while he was dressing, Partridge, notwithstanding many severe rebukes, could not avoid throwing forth certain pieces of brutality, commonly called jests, on this occasion. Jones was no sooner dressed than he walked downstairs, and knocking at the door, was presently admitted by the maid, into the outward parlour, which was as empty of company as it was of any apparatus for eating. Mrs Miller was in the inner room with her daughter, whence the maid presently brought a message to Mr Jones, "That her mistress hoped he would excuse the disappointment, but an accident had happened, which made it impossible for her to have the pleasure of his company at breakfast that day; and begged his pardon for not sending him up notice sooner." Jones desired, "She would give herself no trouble about anything so trifling as his disappointment; that he was heartily sorry for the occasion; and that if he could be of any service to her, she might command him."

He had scarce spoke these words, when Mrs Miller, who heard them all, suddenly threw open the door, and coming out to him, in a flood of tears, said, "O Mr Jones! you are certainly one of the best young men alive. I give you a thousand thanks for your kind offer of your service; but, alas! sir, it is out of your

power to preserve my poor girl.—O my child! my child! she is undone, she is ruined for ever!" "I hope, madam," said Jones, "no villain"——"O Mr Jones!" said she, "that villain who yesterday left my lodgings, hath betrayed my poor girl; hath destroyed her.—I know you are a man of honour. You have a good—a noble heart, Mr Jones. The actions to which I have been myself a witness, could proceed from no other. I will tell you all: nay, indeed, it is impossible, after what hath happened, to keep it a secret. That Nightingale, that barbarous villain, hath undone my daughter. She is—she is—oh! Mr Jones, my girl is with child by him; and in that condition he hath deserted her. Here! here, sir, is his cruel letter: read it, Mr Jones, and tell me if such another monster lives."

The letter was as follows:

"Dear Nancy,

"As I found it impossible to mention to you what, I am afraid, will be no less shocking to you, than it is to me, I have taken this method to inform you, that my father insists upon my immediately paying my addresses to a young lady of fortune, whom he hath provided for my—I need not write the detested word. Your own good understanding will make you sensible, how entirely I am obliged to an obedience, by which I shall be for ever excluded from your dear arms. The fondness of your mother may encourage you to trust her with the unhappy consequence of our love, which may be easily kept a secret from the world, and for which I will take care to provide, as I will for you. I wish you may feel less on this account than I have suffered; but summon all your fortitude to your assistance, and forgive and forget the man, whom nothing but the prospect of certain ruin could have

forced to write this letter. I bid you forget me, I mean only as a lover; but the best of friends you shall ever find in your faithful, though unhappy,

"J. N."

When Jones had read this letter, they both stood silent during a minute, looking at each other; at last he began thus: "I cannot express, madam, how much I am shocked at what I have read; yet let me beg you, in one particular, to take the writer's advice. Consider the reputation of your daughter."——"It is gone, it is lost, Mr Jones," cryed she, "as well as her innocence. She received the letter in a room full of company, and immediately swooning away upon opening it, the contents were known to every one present. But the loss of her reputation, bad as it is, is not the worst; I shall lose my child; she hath attempted twice to destroy herself already; and though she hath been hitherto prevented, vows she will not outlive it; nor could I myself outlive any accident of that nature.—What then will become of my little Betsy, a helpless infant orphan? and the poor little wretch will, I believe, break her heart at the miseries with which she sees her sister and myself distracted, while she is ignorant of the cause. O 'tis the most sensible, and best-natured little thing! The barbarous, cruel—— hath destroyed us all. O my poor children! Is this the reward of all my cares? Is this the fruit of all my prospects? Have I so chearfully undergone all the labours and duties of a mother? Have I been so tender of their infancy, so careful of their education? Have I been toiling so many years, denying myself even the conveniences of life, to provide some little sustenance for them, to lose one or both in such a manner?" "Indeed, madam," said Jones, with tears in his eyes, "I pity you from my soul."—"O! Mr

Jones," answered she, "even you, though I know the goodness of your heart, can have no idea of what I feel. The best, the kindest, the most dutiful of children! O my poor Nancy, the darling of my soul! the delight of my eyes! the pride of my heart! too much, indeed, my pride; for to those foolish, ambitious hopes, arising from her beauty, I owe her ruin. Alas! I saw with pleasure the liking which this young man had for her. I thought it an honourable affection; and flattered my foolish vanity with the thoughts of seeing her married to one so much her superior. And a thousand times in my presence, nay, often in yours, he hath endeavoured to soothe and encourage these hopes by the most generous expressions of disinterested love, which he hath always directed to my poor girl, and which I, as well as she, believed to be real. Could I have believed that these were only snares laid to betray the innocence of my child, and for the ruin of us all?"—At these words little Betsy came running into the room, crying, "Dear mamma, for heaven's sake come to my sister; for she is in another fit, and my cousin can't hold her." Mrs Miller immediately obeyed the summons; but first ordered Betsy to stay with Mr Jones, and begged him to entertain her a few minutes, saying, in the most pathetic voice, "Good heaven! let me preserve one of my children at least."

Jones, in compliance with this request, did all he could to comfort the little girl, though he was, in reality, himself very highly affected with Mrs Miller's story. He told her "Her sister would be soon very well again; that by taking on in that manner she would not only make her sister worse, but make her mother ill too." "Indeed, sir," says she, "I would not do anything to hurt them for the world. I would burst my heart rather than they should see me cry.—But

my poor sister can't see me cry.—I am afraid she will never be able to see me cry any more. Indeed, I can't part with her; indeed, I can't.—And then poor mamma too, what will become of her?—She says she will die too, and leave me: but I am resolved I won't be left behind." "And are you not afraid to die, my little Betsy?" said Jones. "Yes," answered she, "I was always afraid to die; because I must have left my mamma, and my sister; but I am not afraid of going anywhere with those I love."

Jones was so pleased with this answer, that he eagerly kissed the child; and soon after Mrs Miller returned, saying, "She thanked heaven Nancy was now come to herself. And now, Betsy," says she, "you may go in, for your sister is better, and longs to see you." She then turned to Jones, and began to renew her apologies for having disappointed him of his breakfast.

"I hope, madam," said Jones, "I shall have a more exquisite repast than any you could have provided for me. This, I assure you, will be the case, if I can do any service to this little family of love. But whatever success may attend my endeavours, I am resolved to attempt it. I am very much deceived in Mr Nightingale, if, notwithstanding what hath happened, he hath not much goodness of heart at the bottom, as well as a very violent affection for your daughter. If this be the case, I think the picture which I shall lay before him will affect him. Endeavour, madam, to comfort yourself, and Miss Nancy, as well as you can. I will go instantly in quest of Mr Nightingale; and I hope to bring you good news."

Mrs Miller fell upon her knees and invoked all the blessings of heaven upon Mr Jones; to which she afterwards added the most passionate expressions of

gratitude. He then departed to find Mr Nightingale, and the good woman returned to comfort her daughter, who was somewhat cheared at what her mother told her; and both joined in resounding the praises of Mr Jones.

Chapter viij.

The interview between Mr Jones and Mr Nightingale.

THE good or evil we confer on others very often, I believe, recoils on ourselves. For as men of a benign disposition enjoy their own acts of beneficence equally with those to whom they are done, so there are scarce any natures so entirely diabolical, as to be capable of doing injuries, without paying themselves some pangs for the ruin which they bring on their fellow-creatures.

Mr Nightingale, at least, was not such a person. On the contrary, Jones found him in his new lodgings, sitting melancholy by the fire, and silently lamenting the unhappy situation in which he had placed poor Nancy. He no sooner saw his friend appear than he arose hastily to meet him; and after much congratulation said, "Nothing could be more opportune than this kind visit; for I was never more in the spleen in my life."

"I am sorry," answered Jones, "that I bring news very unlikely to relieve you: nay, what I am convinced must, of all other, shock you the most. However, it is necessary you should know it. Without further preface, then, I come to you, Mr Nightingale, from a worthy family, which you have involved in misery and ruin." Mr Nightingale changed colour at these

words; but Jones, without regarding it, proceeded, in the liveliest manner, to paint the tragical story with which the reader was acquainted in the last chapter.

Nightingale never once interrupted the narration, though he discovered violent emotions at many parts of it. But when it was concluded, after fetching a deep sigh, he said, "What you tell me, my friend, affects me in the tenderest manner. Sure there never was so cursed an accident as the poor girl's betraying my letter. Her reputation might otherwise have been safe, and the affair might have remained a profound secret; and then the girl might have gone off never the worse; for many such things happen in this town: and if the husband should suspect a little, when it is too late, it will be his wiser conduct to conceal his suspicion both from his wife and the world."

"Indeed, my friend," answered Jones, "this could not have been the case with your poor Nancy. You have so entirely gained her affections, that it is the loss of you, and not of her reputation, which afflicts her, and will end in the destruction of her and her family." "Nay, for that matter, I promise you," cries Nightingale, "she hath my affections so absolutely, that my wife, whoever she is to be, will have very little share in them." "And is it possible then," said Jones, "you can think of deserting her?" "Why, what can I do?" answered the other. "Ask Miss Nancy," replied Jones warmly. "In the condition to which you have reduced her, I sincerely think she ought to determine what reparation you shall make her. Her interest alone, and not yours, ought to be your sole consideration. But if you ask me what you shall do, what can you do less," cries Jones, "than fulfil the expectations of her family, and her own? Nay, I sincerely tell you, they were mine too, ever since I first saw you together. You will pardon me if I presume on the

friendship you have favoured me with, moved as I am with compassion for those poor creatures. But your own heart will best suggest to you, whether you have never intended, by your conduct, to persuade the mother, as well as the daughter, into an opinion, that you designed honourably: and if so, though there may have been no direct promise of marriage in the case, I will leave to your own good understanding, how far you are bound to proceed."

"Nay, I must not only confess what you have hinted," said Nightingale; "but I am afraid even that very promise you mention I have given." "And can you, after owning that," said Jones, "hesitate a moment?" "Consider, my friend," answered the other; "I know you are a man of honour, and would advise no one to act contrary to its rules; if there were no other objection, can I, after this publication of her disgrace, think of such an alliance with honour?" "Undoubtedly," replied Jones, "and the very best and truest honour, which is goodness, requires it of you. As you mention a scruple of this kind, you will give me leave to examine it. Can you with honour be guilty of having under false pretences deceived a young woman and her family, and of having by these means treacherously robbed her of her innocence? Can you, with honour, be the knowing, the wilful occasion, nay, the artful contriver of the ruin of a human being? Can you, with honour, destroy the fame, the peace, nay, probably, both the life and soul too, of this creature? Can honour bear the thought, that this creature is a tender, helpless, defenceless, young woman? A young woman, who loves, who doats on you, who dies for you; who hath placed the utmost confidence in your promises; and to that confidence hath sacrificed everything which is dear to her? Can honour support such contemplations as these a moment?"

"Common sense, indeed," said Nightingale, "warrants all you say; but yet you well know the opinion of the world is so contrary to it, that, was I to marry a whore, though my own, I should be ashamed of ever showing my face again."

"Fie upon it, Mr Nightingale!" said Jones, "do not call her by so ungenerous a name: when you promised to marry her she became your wife; and she hath sinned more against prudence than virtue. And what is this world which you would be ashamed to face but the vile, the foolish, and the profligate? Forgive me if I say such a shame must proceed from false modesty, which always attends false honour as its shadow.—But I am well assured there is not a man of real sense and goodness in the world who would not honour and applaud the action. But, admit no other would, would not your own heart, my friend, applaud it? And do not the warm, rapturous sensations, which we feel from the consciousness of an honest, noble, generous, benevolent action, convey more delight to the mind than the undeserved praise of millions? Set the alternative fairly before your eyes. On the one side, see this poor, unhappy, tender, believing girl, in the arms of her wretched mother, breathing her last. Hear her breaking heart in agonies, sighing out your name; and lamenting, rather than accusing, the cruelty which weighs her down to destruction. Paint to your imagination the circumstances of her fond despairing parent, driven to madness, or, perhaps, to death, by the loss of her lovely daughter. View the poor, helpless, orphan infant; and when your mind hath dwelt a moment only on such ideas, consider yourself as the cause of all the ruin of this poor, little, worthy, defenceless family. On the other side, consider yourself as relieving them from their temporary sufferings. Think with what joy, with what transports that lovely creature

will fly to your arms. See her blood returning to her pale cheeks, her fire to her languid eyes, and raptures to her tortured breast. Consider the exultations of her mother, the happiness of all. Think of this little family made by one act of yours completely happy. Think of this alternative, and sure I am mistaken in my friend if it requires any long deliberation whether he will sink these wretches down for ever, or, by one generous, noble resolution, raise them all from the brink of misery and despair to the highest pitch of human happiness. Add to this but one consideration more; the consideration that it is your duty so to do—That the misery from which you will relieve these poor people is the misery which you yourself have wilfully brought upon them."

"O, my dear friend!" cries Nightingale, "I wanted not your eloquence to rouse me. I pity poor Nancy from my soul, and would willingly give anything in my power that no familiarities had ever passed between us. Nay, believe me, I had many struggles with my passion before I could prevail with myself to write that cruel letter, which hath caused all the misery in that unhappy family. If I had no inclinations to consult but my own, I would marry her to-morrow morning: I would, by heaven! but you will easily imagine how impossible it would be to prevail on my father to consent to such a match; besides, he hath provided another for me; and to-morrow, by his express command, I am to wait on the lady."

"I have not the honour to know your father," said Jones; "but, suppose he could be persuaded, would you yourself consent to the only means of preserving these poor people?" "As eagerly as I would pursue my happiness," answered Nightingale: "for I never shall find it in any other woman.—O, my dear friend! could you imagine what I have felt within these twelve hours

for my poor girl, I am convinced she would not engross all your pity. Passion leads me only to her; and, if I had any foolish scruples of honour, you have fully satisfied them: could my father be induced to comply with my desires, nothing would be wanting to compleat my own happiness or that of my Nancy."

"Then I am resolved to undertake it," said Jones. "You must not be angry with me, in whatever light it may be necessary to set this affair, which, you may depend on it, could not otherwise be long hid from him: for things of this nature make a quick progress when once they get abroad, as this unhappily hath already. Besides, should any fatal accident follow, as upon my soul I am afraid will, unless immediately prevented, the public would ring of your name in a manner which, if your father hath common humanity, must offend him. If you will therefore tell me where I may find the old gentleman, I will not lose a moment in the business; which, while I pursue, you cannot do a more generous action than by paying a visit to the poor girl. You will find I have not exaggerated in the account I have given of the wretchedness of the family."

Nightingale immediately consented to the proposal; and now, having acquainted Jones with his father's lodging, and the coffee-house where he would most probably find him, he hesitated a moment, and then said, "My dear Tom, you are going to undertake an impossibility. If you knew my father you would never think of obtaining his consent.——Stay, there is one way—suppose you told him I was already married, it might be easier to reconcile him to the fact after it was done; and, upon my honour, I am so affected with what you have said, and I love my Nancy so passionately, I almost wish it was done, whatever might be the consequence."

Jones greatly approved the hint, and promised to pursue it. They then separated, Nightingale to visit his Nancy, and Jones in quest of the old gentleman.

Chapter viii.

What passed between Jones and old Mr Nightingale; with the arrival of a person not yet mentioned in this history.

NOTWITHSTANDING the sentiment of the Roman satirist, which denies the divinity of fortune, and the opinion of Seneca to the same purpose; Cicero, who was, I believe, a wiser man than either of them, expressly holds the contrary; and certain it is, there are some incidents in life so very strange and unaccountable, that it seems to require more than human skill and foresight in producing them.

Of this kind was what now happened to Jones, who found Mr Nightingale the elder in so critical a minute, that Fortune, if she was really worthy all the worship she received at Rome, could not have contrived such another. In short, the old gentleman, and the father of the young lady whom he intended for his son, had been hard at it for many hours; and the latter was just now gone, and had left the former delighted with the thoughts that he had succeeded in a long contention, which had been between the two fathers of the future bride and bridegroom; in which both endeavoured to overreach the other, and, as it not rarely happens in such cases, both had retreated fully satisfied of having obtained the victory.

This gentleman, whom Mr Jones now visited, was what they call a man of the world; that is to say, a

man who directs his conduct in this world as one who, being fully persuaded there is no other, is resolved to make the most of this. In his early years he had been bred to trade; but, having acquired a very good fortune, he had lately declined his business; or, to speak more properly, had changed it from dealing in goods, to dealing only in money, of which he had always a plentiful fund at command, and of which he knew very well how to make a very plentiful advantage, sometimes of the necessities of private men, and sometimes of those of the public. He had indeed conversed so entirely with money, that it may be almost doubted whether he imagined there was any other thing really existing in the world; this at least may be certainly averred, that he firmly believed nothing else to have any real value.

The reader will, I fancy, allow that Fortune could not have culled out a more improper person for Mr Jones to attack with any probability of success; nor could the whimsical lady have directed this attack at a more unseasonable time.

As money then was always uppermost in this gentleman's thoughts, so the moment he saw a stranger within his doors it immediately occurred to his imagination, that such stranger was either come to bring him money, or to fetch it from him. And according as one or other of these thoughts prevailed, he conceived a favourable or unfavourable idea of the person who approached him.

Unluckily for Jones, the latter of these was the ascendant at present; for as a young gentleman had visited him the day before, with a bill from his son for a play debt, he apprehended, at the first sight of Jones, that he was come on such another errand. Jones therefore had no sooner told him that he was come on his son's account than the old gentleman, being confirmed in his suspicion, burst forth into an exclamation,

"That he would lose his labour." "Is it then possible, sir," answered Jones, "that you can guess my business?" "If I do guess it," replied the other, "I repeat again to you, you will lose your labour. What, I suppose you are one of those sparks who lead my son into all those scenes of riot and debauchery, which will be his destruction? but I shall pay no more of his bills, I promise you. I expect he will quit all such company for the future. If I had imagined otherwise, I should not have provided a wife for him; for I would be instrumental in the ruin of nobody." "How, sir," said Jones, "and was this lady of your providing?" "Pray, sir," answered the old gentleman, "how comes it to be any concern of yours?"—"Nay, dear sir," replied Jones, "be not offended that I interest myself in what regards your son's happiness, for whom I have so great an honour and value. It was upon that very account I came to wait upon you. I can't express the satisfaction you have given me by what you say; for I do assure you your son is a person for whom I have the highest honour.—Nay, sir, it is not easy to express the esteem I have for you; who could be so generous, so good, so kind, so indulgent to provide such a match for your son; a woman, who, I dare swear, will make him one of the happiest men upon earth."

There is scarce anything which so happily introduces men to our good liking, as having conceived some alarm at their first appearance; when once those apprehensions begin to vanish we soon forget the fears which they occasioned, and look on ourselves as indebted for our present ease to those very persons who at first raised our fears.

Thus it happened to Nightingale, who no sooner found that Jones had no demand on him, as he suspected, than he began to be pleased with his presence.

"Pray, good sir," said he, "be pleased to sit down. I do not remember to have ever had the pleasure of seeing you before; but if you are a friend of my son, and have anything to say concerning this young lady, I shall be glad to hear you. As to her making him happy, it will be his own fault if she doth not. I have discharged my duty, in taking care of the main article. She will bring him a fortune capable of making any reasonable, prudent, sober man, happy." "Undoubtedly," cries Jones, "for she is in herself a fortune; so beautiful, so genteel, so sweet-tempered, and so well-educated; she is indeed a most accomplished young lady; sings admirably well, and hath a most delicate hand at the harpsichord." "I did not know any of these matters," answered the old gentleman, "for I never saw the lady: but I do not like her the worse for what you tell me; and I am the better pleased with her father for not laying any stress on these qualifications in our bargain. I shall always think it a proof of his understanding. A silly fellow would have brought in these articles as an addition to her fortune; but, to give him his due, he never mentioned any such matter; though to be sure they are no disparagements to a woman." "I do assure you, sir," cries Jones, "she hath them all in the most eminent degree: for my part, I own I was afraid you might have been a little backward, a little less inclined to the match; for your son told me you had never seen the lady; therefore I came, sir, in that case, to entreat you, to conjure you, as you value the happiness of your son, not to be averse to his match with a woman who hath not only all the good qualities I have mentioned, but many more."—"If that was your business, sir," said the old gentleman, "we are both obliged to you; and you may be perfectly easy; for I give you my word I was very well satisfied with her fortune."

"Sir," answered Jones, "I honour you every moment more and more. To be so easily satisfied, so very moderate on that account, is a proof of the soundness of your understanding, as well as the nobleness of your mind."——"Not so very moderate, young gentleman, not so very moderate," answered the father.—"Still more and more noble," replied Jones; "and give me leave to add, sensible: for sure it is little less than madness to consider money as the sole foundation of happiness. Such a woman as this with her little, her nothing of a fortune"—"I find," cries the old gentleman, "you have a pretty just opinion of money, my friend, or else you are better acquainted with the person of the lady than with her circumstances. Why, pray, what fortune do you imagine this lady to have?" "What fortune?" cries Jones, "why, too contemptible a one to be named for your son."—"Well, well, well," said the other, "perhaps he might have done better." —"That I deny," said Jones, "for she is one of the best of women."—"Ay, ay, but in point of fortune I mean," answered the other. "And yet, as to that now, how much do you imagine your friend is to have?" —"How much?" cries Jones, "how much? Why, at the utmost, perhaps £200." "Do you mean to banter me, young gentleman?" said the father, a little angry. "No, upon my soul," answered Jones, "I am in earnest: nay, I believe I have gone to the utmost farthing. If I do the lady an injury, I ask her pardon." "Indeed you do," cries the father; "I am certain she hath fifty times that sum, and she shall produce fifty to that before I consent that she shall marry my son." "Nay," said Jones, "it is too late to talk of consent now; if she had not fifty farthings your son is married." —"My son married!" answered the old gentleman, with surprize. "Nay," said Jones, "I thought you was unacquainted with it." "My son married to Miss

Harris!" answered he again. "To Miss Harris!" said Jones; "no, sir; to Miss Nancy Miller, the daughter of Mrs Miller, at whose house he lodged; a young lady, who, though her mother is reduced to let lodgings—"—"Are you bantering, or are you in earnest?" cries the father, with a most solemn voice. "Indeed, sir," answered Jones, "I scorn the character of a banterer. I came to you in most serious earnest, imagining, as I find true, that your son had never dared acquaint you with a match so much inferior to him in point of fortune, though the reputation of the lady will suffer it no longer to remain a secret."

While the father stood like one struck suddenly dumb at this news, a gentleman came into the room, and saluted him by the name of brother.

But though these two were in consanguinity so nearly related, they were in their dispositions almost the opposites to each other. The brother who now arrived had likewise been bred to trade, in which he no sooner saw himself worth £6000 than he purchased a small estate with the greatest part of it, and retired into the country; where he married the daughter of an unbeneficed clergyman; a young lady, who, though she had neither beauty nor fortune, had recommended herself to his choice entirely by her good humour, of which she possessed a very large share.

With this woman he had, during twenty-five years, lived a life more resembling the model which certain poets ascribe to the golden age, than any of those patterns which are furnished by the present times. By her he had four children, but none of them arrived at maturity, except only one daughter, whom, in vulgar language, he and his wife had spoiled; that is, had educated with the utmost tenderness and fondness, which she returned to such a degree, that she had actually refused a very extraordinary match with a

gentleman a little turned of forty, because she could not bring herself to part with her parents.

The young lady whom Mr Nightingale had intended for his son was a near neighbour of his brother, and an acquaintance of his niece; and in reality it was upon the account of his projected match that he was now come to town; not, indeed, to forward, but to dissuade his brother from a purpose which he conceived would inevitably ruin his nephew; for he foresaw no other event from a union with Miss Harris, notwithstanding the largeness of her fortune, as neither her person nor mind seemed to him to promise any kind of matrimonial felicity: for she was very tall, very thin, very ugly, very affected, very silly, and very ill-natured.

His brother, therefore, no sooner mentioned the marriage of his nephew with Miss Miller, than he exprest the utmost satisfaction; and when the father had very bitterly reviled his son, and pronounced sentence of beggary upon him, the uncle began in the following manner:

"If you was a little cooler, brother, I would ask you whether you love your son for his sake or for your own. You would answer, I suppose, and so I suppose you think, for his sake; and doubtless it is his happiness which you intended in the marriage you proposed for him.

"Now, brother, to prescribe rules of happiness to others hath always appeared to me very absurd, and to insist on doing this, very tyrannical. It is a vulgar error, I know; but it is, nevertheless, an error. And if this be absurd in other things, it is mostly so in the affair of marriage, the happiness of which depends entirely on the affection which subsists between the parties.

"I have therefore always thought it unreasonable in parents to desire to chuse for their children on this

occasion; since to force affection is an impossible attempt; nay, so much doth love abhor force, that I know not whether, through an unfortunate but uncurable perverseness in our natures, it may not be even impatient of persuasion.

"It is, however, true that, though a parent will not, I think, wisely prescribe, he ought to be consulted on this occasion; and, in strictness, perhaps, should at least have a negative voice. My nephew, therefore, I own, in marrying, without asking your advice, hath been guilty of a fault. But, honestly speaking, brother, have you not a little promoted this fault? Have not your frequent declarations on this subject given him a moral certainty of your refusal, where there was any deficiency in point of fortune? Nay, doth not your present anger arise solely from that deficiency? And if he hath failed in his duty here, did you not as much exceed that authority when you absolutely bargained with him for a woman, without his knowledge, whom you yourself never saw, and whom, if you had seen and known as well as I, it must have been madness in you to have ever thought of bringing her into your family?

"Still I own my nephew in a fault; but surely it is not an unpardonable fault. He hath acted indeed without your consent, in a matter in which he ought to have asked it, but it is in a matter in which his interest is principally concerned; you yourself must and will acknowledge that you consulted his interest only, and if he unfortunately differed from you, and hath been mistaken in his notion of happiness, will you, brother, if you love your son, carry him still wider from the point? Will you increase the ill consequences of his simple choice? Will you endeavour to make an event certain misery to him, which may accidentally prove so? In a word, brother, because he hath put it out of

your power to make his circumstances as affluent as you would, will you distress them as much as you can?"

By the force of the true Catholic faith St Anthony won upon the fishes. Orpheus and Amphion went a little farther, and by the charms of music enchanted things merely inanimate. Wonderful, both! but neither history nor fable have ever yet ventured to record an instance of any one, who, by force of argument and reason, hath triumphed over habitual avarice.

Mr Nightingale, the father, instead of attempting to answer his brother, contented himself with only observing, that they had always differed in their sentiments concerning the education of their children. "I wish," said he, "brother, you would have confined your care to your own daughter, and never have troubled yourself with my son, who hath, I believe, as little profited by your precepts, as by your example." For young Nightingale was his uncle's godson, and had lived more with him than with his father. So that the uncle had often declared he loved his nephew almost equally with his own child.

Jones fell into raptures with this good gentleman; and when, after much persuasion, they found the father grew still more and more irritated, instead of appeased, Jones conducted the uncle to his nephew at the house of Mrs Miller.

Chapter ix.

Containing strange matters.

AT his return to his lodgings, Jones found the situation of affairs greatly altered from what they had been in at his departure. The mother, the two daughters, and young Mr Nightingale, were now sat down to supper together, when the uncle was,

at his own desire, introduced without any ceremony into the company, to all of whom he was well known; for he had several times visited his nephew at that house.

The old gentleman immediately walked up to Miss Nancy, saluted and wished her joy, as he did afterwards the mother and the other sister; and lastly, he paid the proper compliments to his nephew, with the same good humour and courtesy, as if his nephew had married his equal or superior in fortune, with all the previous requisites first performed.

Miss Nancy and her supposed husband both turned pale, and looked rather foolish than otherwise upon the occasion; but Mrs Miller took the first opportunity of withdrawing; and, having sent for Jones into the dining-room, she threw herself at his feet, and in a most passionate flood of tears, called him her good angel, the preserver of her poor little family, with many other respectful and endearing appellations, and made him every acknowledgment which the highest benefit can extract from the most grateful heart.

After the first gust of her passion was a little over, which she declared, if she had not vented, would have burst her, she proceeded to inform Mr Jones that all matters were settled between Mr Nightingale and her daughter, and that they were to be married the next morning; at which Mr Jones having expressed much pleasure, the poor woman fell again into a fit of joy and thanksgiving, which he at length with difficulty silenced, and prevailed on her to return with him back to the company, whom they found in the same good humour in which they had left them.

This little society now past two or three very agreeable hours together, in which the uncle, who was a very great lover of his bottle, had so well plyed his nephew, that this latter, though not drunk, began to be

somewhat flustered; and now Mr Nightingale, taking the old gentleman with him upstairs into the apartment he had lately occupied, unbosomed himself as follows:—

"As you have been always the best and kindest of uncles to me, and as you have shown such unparalleled goodness in forgiving this match, which to be sure may be thought a little improvident, I should never forgive myself if I attempted to deceive you in anything." He then confessed the truth, and opened the whole affair.

"How, Jack?" said the old gentleman, "and are you really then not married to this young woman?" "No, upon my honour," answered Nightingale, "I have told you the simple truth." "My dear boy," cries the uncle, kissing him, "I am heartily glad to hear it. I never was better pleased in my life. If you had been married I should have assisted you as much as was in my power to have made the best of a bad matter; but there is a great difference between considering a thing which is already done and irrecoverable, and that which is yet to do. Let your reason have fair play, Jack, and you will see this match in so foolish and preposterous a light, that there will be no need of any dissuasive arguments." "How, sir?" replies young Nightingale, "is there this difference between having already done an act, and being in honour engaged to do it?" "Pugh!" said the uncle, "honour is a creature of the world's making, and the world hath the power of a creator over it, and may govern and direct it as they please. Now you well know how trivial these breaches of contract are thought; even the grossest make but the wonder and conversation of a day. Is there a man who afterwards will be more backward in giving you his sister, or daughter? or is there any sister or daughter who would

be more backward to receive you? Honour is not concerned in these engagements." "Pardon me, dear sir," cries Nightingale, "I can never think so; and not only honour, but conscience and humanity, are concerned. I am well satisfied, that, was I now to disappoint the young creature, her death would be the consequence, and I should look upon myself as her murderer; nay, as her murderer by the cruellest of all methods, by breaking her heart." "Break her heart, indeed! no, no, Jack," cries the uncle, "the hearts of women are not so soon broke; they are tough, boy, they are tough." "But, sir," answered Nightingale, "my own affections are engaged, and I never could be happy with any other woman. How often have I heard you say, that children should be always suffered to chuse for themselves, and that you would let my cousin Harriet do so?" "Why, ay," replied the old gentleman, "so I would have them; but then I would have them chuse wisely.—Indeed, Jack, you must and shall leave the girl."——"Indeed, uncle," cries the other, "I must and will have her." "You will, young gentleman;" said the uncle; "I did not expect such a word from you. I should not wonder if you had used such language to your father, who hath always treated you like a dog, and kept you at the distance which a tyrant preserves over his subjects; but I, who have lived with you upon an equal footing, might surely expect better usage: but I know how to account for it all: it is all owing to your preposterous education, in which I have had too little share. There is my daughter, now, whom I have brought up as my friend, never doth anything without my advice, nor ever refuses to take it when I give it her." "You have never yet given her advice in an affair of this kind," said Nightingale; "for I am greatly mistaken in my cousin, if she would be very ready to obey even your

most positive commands in abandoning her inclinations." "Don't abuse my girl," answered the old gentleman with some emotion; "don't abuse my Harriet. I have brought her up to have no inclinations contrary to my own. By suffering her to do whatever she pleases, I have enured her to a habit of being pleased to do whatever I like." "Pardon, me, sir," said Nightingale, "I have not the least design to reflect on my cousin, for whom I have the greatest esteem; and indeed I am convinced you will never put her to so severe a tryal, or lay such hard commands on her as you would do on me.—But, dear sir, let us return to the company; for they will begin to be uneasy at our long absence. I must beg one favour of my dear uncle, which is that he would not say anything to shock the poor girl or her mother." "Oh! you need not fear me," answered he, "I understand myself too well to affront women; so I will readily grant you that favour; and in return I must expect another of you." "There are but few of your commands, sir," said Nightingale, "which I shall not very chearfully obey." "Nay, sir, I ask nothing," said the uncle, "but the honour of your company home to my lodging, that I may reason the case a little more fully with you; for I would, if possible, have the satisfaction of preserving my family, notwithstanding the headstrong folly of my brother, who, in his own opinion, is the wisest man in the world."

Nightingale, who well knew his uncle to be as headstrong as his father, submitted to attend him home, and then they both returned back into the room, where the old gentleman promised to carry himself with the same decorum which he had before maintained.

Chapter x.

A short chapter, which concludes the book.

THE long absence of the uncle and nephew had occasioned some disquiet in the minds of all whom they had left behind them; and the more, as, during the preceding dialogue, the uncle had more than once elevated his voice, so as to be heard downstairs; which, though they could not distinguish what he said, had caused some evil foreboding in Nancy and her mother, and, indeed, even in Jones himself.

When the good company, therefore, again assembled, there was a visible alteration in all their faces; and the good-humour which, at their last meeting, universally shone forth in every countenance, was now changed into a much less agreeable aspect. It was a change, indeed, common enough to the weather in this climate, from sunshine to clouds, from June to December.

This alteration was not, however, greatly remarked by any present; for as they were all now endeavouring to conceal their own thoughts, and to act a part, they became all too busily engaged in the scene to be spectators of it. Thus neither the uncle nor nephew saw any symptoms of suspicion in the mother or daughter; nor did the mother or daughter remark the overacted complacence of the old man, nor the counterfeit satisfaction which grinned in the features of the young one.

Something like this, I believe, frequently happens, where the whole attention of two friends being engaged in the part which each is to act, in order to impose on the other, neither sees nor suspects the arts practised against himself; and thus the thrust of both (to borrow no improper metaphor on the occasion) alike takes place.

From the same reason it is no unusual thing for both

parties to be overreached in a bargain, though the one must be always the greater loser; as was he who sold a blind horse, and received a bad note in payment.

Our company in about half an hour broke up, and the uncle carried off his nephew; but not before the latter had assured Miss Nancy, in a whisper, that he would attend her early in the morning, and fulfil all his engagements.

Jones, who was the least concerned in this scene, saw the most. He did indeed suspect the very fact; for, besides observing the great alteration in the behaviour of the uncle, the distance he assumed, and his overstrained civility to Miss Nancy; the carrying off a bridegroom from his bride at that time of night was so extraordinary a proceeding that it could be accounted for only by imagining that young Nightingale had revealed the whole truth, which the apparent openness of his temper, and his being flustered with liquor, made too probable.

While he was reasoning with himself, whether he should acquaint these poor people with his suspicion, the maid of the house informed him that a gentlewoman desired to speak with him.——He went immediately out, and, taking the candle from the maid, ushered his visitant upstairs, who, in the person of Mrs Honour, acquainted him with such dreadful news concerning his Sophia, that he immediately lost all consideration for every other person; and his whole stock of compassion was entirely swallowed up in reflections on his own misery, and on that of his unfortunate angel.

What this dreadful matter was, the reader will be informed, after we have first related the many preceding steps which produced it, and those will be the subject of the following book.

BOOK XV.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY ADVANCES ABOUT TWO DAYS.

Chapter i.

Too short to need a preface.

THERE are a set of religious, or rather moral writers, who teach that virtue is the certain road to happiness, and vice to misery, in this world. A very wholesome and comfortable doctrine, and to which we have but one objection, namely, that it is not true.

Indeed, if by virtue these writers mean the exercise of those cardinal virtues, which like good housewives stay at home, and mind only the business of their own family, I shall very readily concede the point; for so surely do all these contribute and lead to happiness, that I could almost wish, in violation of all the antient and modern sages, to call them rather by the name of wisdom, than by that of virtue; for, with regard to this life, no system, I conceive, was ever wiser than that of the antient Epicureans, who held this wisdom to constitute the chief good; nor foolisher than that of their opposites, those modern epicures, who place all felicity in the abundant gratification of every sensual appetite.

But if by virtue is meant (as I almost think it ought) a certain relative quality, which is always busying itself without-doors, and seems as much interested in pursuing the good of others as its own; I cannot so easily agree that this is the surest way to human happiness; because I am afraid we must then include poverty and contempt, with all the mischiefs which backbiting, envy, and ingratitude, can bring on mankind, in our idea of happiness; nay, sometimes perhaps we shall be obliged to wait upon the said happiness to a jail; since many by the above virtue have brought themselves thither.

I have not now leisure to enter upon so large a field of speculation, as here seems opening upon me; my design was to wipe off a doctrine that lay in my way; since, while Mr Jones was acting the most virtuous part imaginable in labouring to preserve his fellow-creatures from destruction, the devil, or some other evil spirit, one perhaps cloathed in human flesh, was hard at work to make him completely miserable in the ruin of his Sophia.

This therefore would seem an exception to the above rule, if indeed it was a rule; but as we have in our voyage through life seen so many other exceptions to it, we chuse to dispute the doctrine on which it is founded, which we don't apprehend to be Christian, which we are convinced is not true, and which is indeed destructive of one of the noblest arguments that reason alone can furnish for the belief of immortality.

But as the reader's curiosity (if he hath any) must be now awake, and hungry, we shall provide to feed it as fast as we can.

Chapter ij.

In which is opened a very black design against Sophia.

I REMEMBER a wise old gentleman who used to say, "When children are doing nothing, they are doing mischief." I will not enlarge this quaint saying to the most beautiful part of the creation in general; but so far I may be allowed, that when the effects of female jealousy do not appear openly in their proper colours of rage and fury, we may suspect that mischievous passion to be at work privately, and attempting to undermine, what it doth not attack above-ground.

This was exemplified in the conduct of Lady Bellaston, who, under all the smiles which she wore in her countenance, concealed much indignation against Sophia; and as she plainly saw that this young lady stood between her and the full indulgence of her desires, she resolved to get rid of her by some means or other; nor was it long before a very favourable opportunity of accomplishing this presented itself to her.

The reader may be pleased to remember, that when Sophia was thrown into that consternation at the play-house, by the wit and humour of a set of young gentlemen who call themselves the town, we informed him, that she had put herself under the protection of a young nobleman, who had very safely conducted her to her chair.

This nobleman, who frequently visited Lady Bellaston, had more than once seen Sophia there, since her arrival in town, and had conceived a very great liking to her; which liking, as beauty never looks more amiable than in distress, Sophia had in this fright so encreased, that he might now, without any great impropriety, be said to be actually in love with her.

It may easily be believed, that he would not suffer so handsome an occasion of improving his acquaintance with the beloved object as now offered itself to elapse, when even good breeding alone might have prompted him to pay her a visit.

The next morning therefore, after this accident, he waited on Sophia, with the usual compliments, and hopes that she had received no harm from her last night's adventure.

As love, like fire, when once thoroughly kindled, is soon blown into a flame, Sophia in a very short time compleated her conquest. Time now flew away unperceived, and the noble lord had been two hours in company with the lady, before it entered into his head that he had made too long a visit. Though this circumstance alone would have alarmed Sophia, who was somewhat more a mistress of computation at present; she had indeed much more pregnant evidence from the eyes of her lover of what past within his bosom; nay, though he did not make any open declaration of his passion, yet many of his expressions were rather too warm, and too tender, to have been imputed to complacence, even in the age when such complacence was in fashion; the very reverse of which is well known to be the reigning mode at present.

Lady Bellaston had been apprized of his lordship's visit at his first arrival; and the length of it very well satisfied her, that things went as she wished, and as indeed she had suspected the second time she saw this young couple together. This business, she rightly I think concluded, that she should by no means forward by mixing in the company while they were together; she therefore ordered her servants, that when my lord was going, they should tell him she desired to speak with him; and employed the intermediate time in meditating how best to accomplish a scheme, which

she made no doubt but his lordship would very readily embrace the execution of.

Lord Fellamar (for that was the title of this young nobleman) was no sooner introduced to her ladyship, than she attacked him in the following strain: "Bless me, my lord, are you here yet? I thought my servants had made a mistake, and let you go away; and I wanted to see you about an affair of some importance."——"Indeed, Lady Bellaston," said he, "I don't wonder you are astonished at the length of my visit; for I have staid above two hours, and I did not think I had staid above half-a-one."——"What am I to conclude from thence, my lord?" said she. "The company must be very agreeable which can make time slide away so very deceitfully."——"Upon my honour," said he, "the most agreeable I ever saw. Pray tell me, Lady Bellaston, who is this blazing star which you have produced among us all of a sudden?"——"What blazing star, my lord?" said she, affecting a surprize. "I mean," said he, "the lady I saw here the other day, whom I had last night in my arms at the play-house, and to whom I have been making that unreasonable visit."——"O, my cousin Western!" said she; "why, that blazing star, my lord, is the daughter of a country booby squire, and hath been in town about a fortnight, for the first time."—— "Upon my soul," said he, "I should swear she had been bred up in a court; for besides her beauty, I never saw anything so genteel, so sensible, so polite." ——"O brave!" cries the lady, "my cousin hath you, I find."——"Upon my honour," answered he, "I wish she had; for I am in love with her to distraction."——"Nay, my lord," said she, "it is not wishing yourself very ill neither, for she is a very great fortune: I assure you she is an only child, and her father's estate is a good £3000 a-year." "Then

I can assure you, madam," answered the lord, "I think her the best match in England." "Indeed, my lord," replied she, "if you like her, I heartily wish you had her." "If you think so kindly of me, madam," said he, "as she is a relation of yours, will you do me the honour to propose it to her father?" "And are you really then in earnest?" cries the lady, with an affected gravity. "I hope, madam," answered he, "you have a better opinion of me, than to imagine I would jest with your ladyship in an affair of this kind." "Indeed, then," said the lady, "I will most readily propose your lordship to her father; and I can, I believe, assure you of his joyful acceptance of the proposal; but there is a bar, which I am almost ashamed to mention; and yet it is one you will never be able to conquer. You have a rival, my lord, and a rival who, though I blush to name him, neither you, nor all the world, will ever be able to conquer." "Upon my word, Lady Bellaston," cries he, "you have struck a damp to my heart, which hath almost deprived me of being." "Fie, my lord," said she, "I should rather hope I had struck fire into you. A lover, and talk of damps in your heart! I rather imagined you would have asked your rival's name, that you might have immediately entered the lists with him." "I promise you, madam," answered he, "there are very few things I would not undertake for your charming cousin; but pray, who is this happy man?"—"Why, he is," said she, "what I am sorry to say most happy men with us are, one of the lowest fellows in the world. He is a beggar, a bastard, a foundling, a fellow in meaner circumstances than one of your lordship's footmen." "And is it possible," cried he, "that a young creature with such perfections should think of bestowing herself so unworthily?" "Alas! my lord," answered she, "consider the

Chapter iij.

A further explanation of the foregoing design.

THOUGH the reader may have long since concluded Lady Bellaston to be a member (and no inconsiderable one) of the great world; she was in reality a very considerable member of the little world; by which appellation was distinguished a very worthy and honourable society which not long since flourished in this kingdom.

Among other good principles upon which this society was founded, there was one very remarkable; for, as it was a rule of an honourable club of heroes, who assembled at the close of the late war, that all the members should every day fight once at least; so 'twas in this, that every member should, within the twenty-four hours, tell at least one merry fib, which was to be propagated by all the brethren and sisterhood.

Many idle stories were told about this society, which from a certain quality may be, perhaps not unjustly, supposed to have come from the society themselves. As, that the devil was the president; and that he sat in person in an elbow-chair at the upper end of the table; but, upon very strict enquiry, I find there is not the least truth in any of those tales, and that the assembly consisted in reality of a set of very good sort of people, and the fibs which they propagated were of a harmless kind, and tended only to produce mirth and good humour.

Edwards was likewise a member of this comical society. To him therefore Lady Bellaston applied as a proper instrument for her purpose, and furnished him with a fib, which he was to vent whenever the lady gave him her cue; and this was not to be till the

evening, when all the company but Lord Fellamar and himself were gone, and while they were engaged in a rubber at whist.

To this time then, which was between seven and eight in the evening, we will convey our reader; when Lady Bellaston, Lord Fellamar, Miss Western, and Tom, being engaged at whist, and in the last game of their rubbers, Tom received his cue from Lady Bellaston, which was, "I protest, Tom, you are grown intolerable lately; you used to tell us all the news of the town, and now you know no more of the world than if you lived out of it."

Mr Edwards then began as follows: "The fault is not mine, madam: it lies in the dulness of the age, that doth nothing worth talking of.——O la! though now I think on't there hath a terrible accident befallen poor Colonel Wilcox.——Poor Ned.——You know him, my lord, everybody knows him; faith! I am very much concerned for him."

"What is it, pray?" says Lady Bellaston.

"Why, he hath killed a man this morning in a duel, that's all."

His lordship, who was not in the secret, asked gravely, whom he had killed? To which Edwards answered, "A young fellow we none of us know; a Somersetshire lad just came to town, one Jones his name is; a near relation of one Mr Allworthy, of whom your lordship I believe hath heard. I saw the lad lie dead in a coffee-house.—Upon my soul, he is one of the finest corpses I ever saw in my life!"

Sophia, who had just began to deal as Tom had mentioned that a man was killed, stopt her hand, and listened with attention (for all stories of that kind affected her), but no sooner had he arrived at the latter part of the story than she began to deal again; and having dealt three cards to one, and seven to another,

and ten to a third, at last dropt the rest from her hand, and fell back in her chair.

The company behaved as usually on these occasions. The usual disturbance ensued, the usual assistance was summoned, and Sophia at last, as it is usual, returned again to life, and was soon after, at her earnest desire, led to her own apartment; where, at my lord's request, Lady Bellaston acquainted her with the truth, attempted to carry it off as a jest of her own, and comforted her with repeated assurances, that neither his lordship nor Tom, though she had taught him the story, were in the true secret of the affair.

There was no farther evidence necessary to convince Lord Fellamar how justly the case had been represented to him by Lady Bellaston; and now, at her return into the room, a scheme was laid between these two noble persons, which, though it appeared in no very heinous light to his lordship (as he faithfully promised, and faithfully resolved too, to make the lady all the subsequent amends in his power by marriage), yet many of our readers, we doubt not, will see with just detestation.

The next evening at seven was appointed for the fatal purpose, when Lady Bellaston undertook that Sophia should be alone, and his lordship should be introduced to her. The whole family were to be regulated for the purpose, most of the servants despatched out of the house; and for Mrs Honour, who, to prevent suspicion, was to be left with her mistress till his lordship's arrival, Lady Bellaston herself was to engage her in an apartment as distant as possible from the scene of the intended mischief, and out of the hearing of Sophia.

Matters being thus agreed on, his lordship took his leave, and her ladyship retired to rest, highly pleased with a project, of which she had no reason to doubt the success, and which promised so effectually to remove

Sophia from being any further obstruction to her amour with Jones, by a means of which she should never appear to be guilty, even if the fact appeared to the world; but this she made no doubt of preventing by huddling up a marriage, to which she thought the ravished Sophia would easily be brought to consent, and at which all the rest of her family would rejoice.

But affairs were not in so quiet a situation in the bosom of the other conspirator; his mind was tost in all the distracting anxiety so nobly described by Shakespear—

> "Between the acting of a dreadful thing,
> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream;
> The genius and the mortal instruments
> Are then in council; and the state of man,
> Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
> The nature of an insurrection."——

Though the violence of his passion had made him eagerly embrace the first hint of this design, especially as it came from a relation of the lady, yet when that friend to reflection, a pillow, had placed the action itself in all its natural black colours before his eyes, with all the consequences which must, and those which might probably attend it, his resolution began to abate, or rather indeed to go over to the other side; and after a long conflict, which lasted a whole night, between honour and appetite, the former at length prevailed, and he determined to wait on Lady Bellaston, and to relinquish the design.

Lady Bellaston was in bed, though very late in the morning, and Sophia sitting by her bed-side, when the servant acquainted her that Lord Fellamar was below in the parlour; upon which her ladyship desired him to stay, and that she would see him presently; but the servant was no sooner departed than poor Sophia began

to intreat her cousin not to encourage the visits of that odious lord (so she called him, though a little unjustly) upon her account. "I see his design," said she; "for he made downright love to me yesterday morning; but as I am resolved never to admit it, I beg your ladyship not to leave us alone together any more, and to order the servants that, if he enquires for me, I may be always denied to him."

"La! child," says Lady Bellaston, "you country girls have nothing but sweethearts in your head; you fancy every man who is civil to you is making love. He is one of the most gallant young fellows about town, and I am convinced means no more than a little gallantry. Make love to you indeed! I wish with all my heart he would, and you must be an arrant mad woman to refuse him."

"But as I shall certainly be that mad woman," cries Sophia, "I hope his visits shall not be intruded upon me."

"O child!" said Lady Bellaston, "you need not be so fearful; if you resolve to run away with that Jones, I know no person who can hinder you."

"Upon my honour, madam," cries Sophia, "your ladyship injures me. I will never run away with any man; nor will I ever marry contrary to my father's inclinations."

"Well, Miss Western," said the lady, "if you are not in a humour to see company this morning, you may retire to your own apartment; for I am not frightened at his lordship, and must send for him up into my dressing-room."

Sophia thanked her ladyship, and withdrew; and presently afterwards Fellamar was admitted upstairs.

Chapter iv.

By which it will appear how dangerous an advocate a lady is when she applies her eloquence to an ill purpose.

WHEN Lady Bellaston heard the young lord's scruples, she treated them with the same disdain with which one of those sages of the law, called Newgate solicitors, treats the qualms of conscience in a young witness. "My dear lord," said she, "you certainly want a cordial. I must send to Lady Edgely for one of her best drams. Fie upon it! have more resolution. Are you frightened by the word rape? Or are you apprehensive——? Well! if the story of Helen was modern, I should think it unnatural. I mean the behaviour of Paris, not the fondness of the lady; for all women love a man of spirit. There is another story of the Sabine ladies—and that too, I thank heaven, is very antient. Your lordship, perhaps, will admire my reading; but I think Mr Hook tells us, they made tolerable good wives afterwards. I fancy few of my married acquaintance were ravished by their husbands." "Nay, dear Lady Bellaston," cried he, "don't ridicule me in this manner." "Why, my good lord," answered she, "do you think any woman in England would not laugh at you in her heart, whatever prudery she might wear in her countenance?——You force me to use a strange kind of language, and to betray my sex most abominably; but I am contented with knowing my intentions are good, and that I am endeavouring to serve my cousin; for I think you will make her a husband notwithstanding this; or, upon my soul, I would not even persuade her to fling herself away upon an empty title. She should not upbraid me hereafter with having lost a man of spirit; for that his enemies allow this poor young fellow to be."

Let those who have had the satisfaction of hearing reflections of this kind from a wife or a mistress, declare whether they are at all sweetened by coming from a female tongue. Certain it is, they sunk deeper into his lordship than anything which Demosthenes or Cicero could have said on the occasion.

Lady Bellaston, perceiving she had fired the young lord's pride, began now, like a true orator, to rouse other passions to its assistance. "My lord," says she, in a graver voice, "you will be pleased to remember, you mentioned this matter to me first; for I would not appear to you in the light of one who is endeavouring to put off my cousin upon you. Fourscore thousand pounds do not stand in need of an advocate to recommend them." "Nor doth Miss Western," said he, "require any recommendation from her fortune; for, in my opinion, no woman ever had half her charms." "Yes, yes, my lord," replied the lady, looking in the glass, "there have been women with more than half her charms, I assure you; not that I need lessen her on that account: she is a most delicious girl, that's certain; and within these few hours she will be in the arms of one, who surely doth not deserve her, though I will give him his due, I believe he is truly a man of spirit."

"I hope so, madam," said my lord; "though I must own he doth not deserve her; for, unless heaven or your ladyship disappoint me, she shall within that time be in mine."

"Well spoken, my lord," answered the lady; "I promise you no disappointment shall happen from my side; and within this week I am convinced I shall call your lordship my cousin in public."

The remainder of this scene consisted entirely of raptures, excuses, and compliments, very pleasant to have heard from the parties; but rather dull when

related at second hand. Here, therefore, we shall put an end to this dialogue, and hasten to the fatal hour when everything was prepared for the destruction of poor Sophia.

But this being the most tragical matter in our whole history, we shall treat it in a chapter by itself.

Chapter v.

Containing some matters which may affect, and others which may surprize, the reader.

THE clock had now struck seven, and poor Sophia, alone and melancholy, sat reading a tragedy. It was the Fatal Marriage; and she was now come to that part where the poor distrest Isabella disposes of her wedding-ring.

Here the book dropt from her hand, and a shower of tears ran down into her bosom. In this situation she had continued a minute, when the door opened, and in came Lord Fellamar. Sophia started from her chair at his entrance; and his lordship advancing forwards, and making a low bow, said, "I am afraid, Miss Western, I break in upon you abruptly." "Indeed, my lord," says she, "I must own myself a little surprized at this unexpected visit." "If this visit be unexpected, madam," answered Lord Fellamar, "my eyes must have been very faithless interpreters of my heart, when last I had the honour of seeing you; for surely you could not otherwise have hoped to detain my heart in your possession, without receiving a visit from its owner." Sophia, confused as she was, answered this bombast (and very properly I think) with a look of inconceivable disdain. My lord then made another and a longer speech of the same sort. Upon which

Sophia, trembling, said, "Am I really to conceive your lordship to be out of your senses? Sure, my lord, there is no other excuse for such behaviour." "I am, indeed, madam, in the situation you suppose," cries his lordship; "and sure you will pardon the effects of a frenzy which you yourself have occasioned; for love hath so totally deprived me of reason, that I am scarce accountable for any of my actions." "Upon my word, my lord," said Sophia, "I neither understand your words nor your behaviour." "Suffer me then, madam," cries he, "at your feet to explain both, by laying open my soul to you, and declaring that I doat on you to the highest degree of distraction. O most adorable, most divine creature! what language can express the sentiments of my heart?" "I do assure you, my lord," said Sophia, "I shall not stay to hear any more of this." "Do not," cries he, "think of leaving me thus cruelly; could you know half the torments which I feel, that tender bosom must pity what those eyes have caused." Then fetching a deep sigh, and laying hold of her hand, he ran on for some minutes in a strain which would be little more pleasing to the reader than it was to the lady; and at last concluded with a declaration, "That if he was master of the world, he would lay it at her feet." Sophia then, forcibly pulling away her hand from his, answered with much spirit, "I promise you, sir, your world and its master I should spurn from me with equal contempt." She then offered to go; and Lord Fellamar, again laying hold of her hand, said, "Pardon me, my beloved angel, freedoms which nothing but despair could have tempted me to take.——Believe me, could I have had any hope that my title and fortune, neither of them inconsiderable, unless when compared with your worth, would have been accepted, I had, in the humblest manner, presented them to your acceptance.——But

I cannot lose you.—By heaven, I will sooner part with my soul!—You are, you must, you shall be only mine." "My lord," says she, "I intreat you to desist from a vain pursuit; for, upon my honour, I will never hear you on this subject. Let go my hand, my lord; for I am resolved to go from you this moment; nor will I ever see you more." "Then, madam," cries his lordship, "I must make the best use of this moment; for I cannot live, nor will I live without you."——"What do you mean, my lord?" said Sophia; "I will raise the family." "I have no fear, madam," answered he, "but of losing you, and that I am resolved to prevent, the only way which despair points to me."—He then caught her in his arms: upon which she screamed so loud, that she must have alarmed some one to her assistance, had not Lady Bellaston taken care to remove all ears.

But a more lucky circumstance happened for poor Sophia; another noise now broke forth, which almost drowned her cries; for now the whole house rang with, "Where is she? D—n me, I'll unkennel her this instant. Show me her chamber, I say. Where is my daughter? I know she's in the house, and I'll see her if she's above-ground. Show me where she is."—At which last words the door flew open, and in came Squire Western, with his parson and a set of myrmidons at his heels.

How miserable must have been the condition of poor Sophia, when the enraged voice of her father was welcome to her ears! Welcome indeed it was, and luckily did he come; for it was the only accident upon earth which could have preserved the peace of her mind from being for ever destroyed.

Sophia, notwithstanding her fright, presently knew her father's voice; and his lordship, notwithstanding his passion, knew the voice of reason, which peremp-

torily assured him, it was not now a time for the perpetration of his villany. Hearing, therefore, the voice approach, and hearing likewise whose it was (for as the squire more than once roared forth the word daughter, so Sophia, in the midst of her struggling, cried out upon her father), he thought proper to relinquish his prey, having only disordered her handkerchief, and with his rude lips committed violence on her lovely neck.

If the reader's imagination doth not assist me, I shall never be able to describe the situation of these two persons when Western came into the room. Sophia tottered into a chair, where she sat disordered, pale, breathless, bursting with indignation at Lord Fellamar; affrighted, and yet more rejoiced, at the arrival of her father.

His lordship sat down near her, with the bag of his wig hanging over one of his shoulders, the rest of his dress being somewhat disordered, and rather a greater proportion of linen than is usual appearing at his bosom. As to the rest, he was amazed, affrighted, vexed, and ashamed.

As to Squire Western, he happened at this time to be overtaken by an enemy, which very frequently pursues, and seldom fails to overtake, most of the country gentlemen in this kingdom. He was, literally speaking, drunk; which circumstance, together with his natural impetuosity, could produce no other effect than his running immediately up to his daughter, upon whom he fell foul with his tongue in the most inveterate manner; nay, he had probably committed violence with his hands, had not the parson interposed, saying, "For heaven's sake, sir, animadvert that you are in the house of a great lady. Let me beg you to mitigate your wrath; it should minister a fulness of satisfaction that you have found your daughter;

for as to revenge, it belongeth not unto us. I discern great contrition in the countenance of the young lady. I stand assured, if you will forgive her, she will repent her of all past offences, and return unto her duty."

The strength of the parson's arms had at first been of more service than the strength of his rhetoric. However, his last words wrought some effect, and the squire answered, "I'll forgee her if she wull ha un. If wot ha un, Sophy, I'll forgee thee all. Why dost unt speak? Shat ha un! d—n me, shat ha un! Why dost unt answer? Was ever such a stubborn tuoad?"

"Let me intreat you, sir, to be a little more moderate," said the parson; "you frighten the young lady so, that you deprive her of all power of utterance."

"Power of mine a——," answered the squire. "You take her part then, you do? A pretty parson, truly, to side with an undutiful child! Yes, yes, I will gee you a living with a pox. I'll gee un to the devil sooner."

"I humbly crave your pardon," said the parson; "I assure your worship I meant no such matter."

My Lady Bellaston now entered the room, and came up to the squire, who no sooner saw her, than, resolving to follow the instructions of his sister, he made her a very civil bow, in the rural manner, and paid her some of his best compliments. He then immediately proceeded to his complaints, and said, "There, my lady cousin; there stands the most undutiful child in the world; she hankers after a beggarly rascal, and won't marry one of the greatest matches in all England, that we have provided for her."

"Indeed, cousin Western," answered the lady, "I am persuaded you wrong my cousin. I am sure she hath a better understanding. I am convinced she will

not refuse what she must be sensible is so much to her advantage."

This was a wilful mistake in Lady Bellaston, for she well knew whom Mr Western meant; though perhaps she thought he would easily be reconciled to his lordship's proposals.

"Do you hear there," quoth the squire, "what her ladyship says? All your family are for the match. Come, Sophy, be a good girl, and be dutiful, and make your father happy."

"If my death will make you happy, sir," answered Sophia, "you will shortly be so."

"It's a lye, Sophy; it's a d—n'd lye, and you know it," said the squire.

"Indeed, Miss Western," said Lady Bellaston, "you injure your father; he hath nothing in view but your interest in this match; and I and all your friends must acknowledge the highest honour done to your family in the proposal."

"Ay, all of us," quoth the squire; "nay, it was no proposal of mine. She knows it was her aunt proposed it to me first.—Come, Sophy, once more let me beg you to be a good girl, and gee me your consent before your cousin."

"Let me give him your hand, cousin," said the lady. "It is the fashion now-a-days to dispense with time and long courtships."

"Pugh!" said the squire, "what signifies time; won't they have time enough to court afterwards? People may court very well after they have been a-bed together."

As Lord Fellamar was very well assured that he was meant by Lady Bellaston, so, never having heard nor suspected a word of Blifil, he made no doubt of his being meant by the father. Coming up, therefore, to the squire, he said, "Though I have not the honour,

sir, of being personally known to you, yet, as I find I have the happiness to have my proposals accepted, let me intercede, sir, in behalf of the young lady, that she may not be more solicited at this time."

"You intercede, sir!" said the squire; "why, who the devil are you?"

"Sir, I am Lord Fellamar," answered he, "and am the happy man whom I hope you have done the honour of accepting for a son-in-law."

"You are a son of a b——," replied the squire, "for all your laced coat. You my son-in-law, and be d—n'd to you!"

"I shall take more from you, sir, than from any man," answered the lord; "but I must inform you that I am not used to hear such language without resentment."

"Resent my a—," quoth the squire. "Don't think I am afraid of such a fellow as thee art! because hast got a spit there dangling at thy side. Lay by your spit, and I'll give thee enough of meddling with what doth not belong to thee. I'll teach you to father-in-law me. I'll lick thy jacket."

"It's very well, sir," said my lord, "I shall make no disturbance before the ladies. I am very well satisfied. Your humble servant, sir; Lady Bellaston, your most obedient."

His lordship was no sooner gone, than Lady Bellaston, coming up to Mr Western, said, "Bless me, sir, what have you done? You know not whom you have affronted; he is a nobleman of the first rank and fortune, and yesterday made proposals to your daughter; and such as I am sure you must accept with the highest pleasure."

"Answer for yourself, lady cousin," said the squire, "I will have nothing to do with any of your lords. My daughter shall have an honest country gentleman;

have pitched upon one for her—and she shall ha' un. —I am sorry for the trouble she hath given your ladyship with all my heart." Lady Bellaston made a civil speech upon the word trouble; to which the squire answered—"Why, that's kind—and I would do as much for your ladyship. To be sure relations should do for one another. So I wish your ladyship a good night.—Come, madam, you must go along with me by fair means, or I'll have you carried down to the coach."

Sophia said she would attend him without force; but begged to go in a chair, for she said she should not be able to ride any other way.

"Prithee," cries the squire, "wout unt persuade me canst not ride in a coach, wouldst? That's a pretty thing surely! No, no, I'll never let thee out of my sight any more till art married, that I promise thee." Sophia told him, she saw he was resolved to break her heart. "O break thy heart and be d—n'd," quoth he, "if a good husband will break it. I don't value a brass varden, not a halfpenny, of any undutiful b— upon earth." He then took violent hold of her hand; upon which the parson once more interfered, begging him to use gentle methods. At that the squire thundered out a curse, and bid the parson hold his tongue, saying, "At'nt in pulpit now? when art a got up there I never mind what dost say; but I won't be priest-ridden, nor taught how to behave myself by thee. I wish your ladyship a good-night. Come along, Sophy; be a good girl, and all shall be well. Shat ha' un, d—n me, shat ha' un!"

Mrs Honour appeared below-stairs, and with a low curtesy to the squire offered to attend her mistress; but he pushed her away, saying, "Hold, madam, hold, you come no more near my house." "And will you take my maid away from me?" said Sophia. "Yes, in-

deed, madam, will I," cries the squire: "you need not fear being without a servant; I will get you another maid, and a better maid than this, who, I'd lay five pounds to a crown, is no more a maid than my grannum. No, no, Sophy, she shall contrive no more escapes, I promise you." He then packed up his daughter and the parson into the hackney coach, after which he mounted himself, and ordered it to drive to his lodgings. In the way thither he suffered Sophia to be quiet, and entertained himself with reading a lecture to the parson on good manners, and a proper behaviour to his betters.

It is possible he might not so easily have carried off his daughter from Lady Bellaston, had that good lady desired to have detained her; but, in reality, she was not a little pleased with the confinement into which Sophia was going; and as her project with Lord Fellamar had failed of success, she was well contented that other violent methods were now going to be used in favour of another man.

Chapter vi.

By what means the squire came to discover his daughter.

THOUGH the reader, in many histories, is obliged to digest much more unaccountable appearances than this of Mr Western, without any satisfaction at all; yet, as we dearly love to oblige him whenever it is in our power, we shall now proceed to shew by what method the squire discovered where his daughter was.

In the third chapter, then, of the preceding book, we gave a hint (for it is not our custom to unfold at

any time more than is necessary for the occasion) that Mrs Fitzpatrick, who was very desirous of reconciling her uncle and aunt Western, thought she had a probable opportunity, by the service of preserving Sophia from committing the same crime which had drawn on herself the anger of her family. After much deliberation, therefore, she resolved to inform her aunt Western where her cousin was, and accordingly she writ the following letter, which we shall give the reader at length, for more reasons than one.

"HONOURED MADAM,

"The occasion of my writing this will perhaps make a letter of mine agreeable to my dear aunt, for the sake of one of her nieces, though I have little reason to hope it will be so on the account of another.

"Without more apology, as I was coming to throw my unhappy self at your feet, I met, by the strangest accident in the world, my cousin Sophy, whose history you are better acquainted with than myself, though, alas! I know infinitely too much; enough indeed to satisfy me, that unless she is immediately prevented, she is in danger of running into the same fatal mischief, which, by foolishly and ignorantly refusing your most wise and prudent advice, I have unfortunately brought on myself.

"In short, I have seen the man, nay, I was most part of yesterday in his company, and a charming young fellow I promise you he is. By what accident he came acquainted with me is too tedious to tell you now; but I have this morning changed my lodgings to avoid him, lest he should by my means discover my cousin; for he doth not yet know where she is, and it is adviseable he should not, till my uncle hath secured her.——No time therefore is to be lost; and I need only inform you, that she is now with Lady Bellaston,

whom I have seen, and who hath, I find, a design of concealing her from her family. You know, madam, she is a strange woman; but nothing could misbecome me more than to presume to give any hint to one of your great understanding and great knowledge of the world, besides barely informing you of the matter of fact.

"I hope, madam, the care which I have shewn on this occasion for the good of my family will recommend me again to the favour of a lady who hath always exerted so much zeal for the honour and true interest of us all; and that it may be a means of restoring me to your friendship, which hath made so great a part of my former, and is so necessary to my future happiness.

"I am,
with the utmost respect,
honoured madam,
your most dutiful obliged niece,
and most obedient humble servant,
HARRIET FITZPATRICK."

Mrs Western was now at her brother's house, where she had resided ever since the flight of Sophia, in order to administer comfort to the poor squire in his affliction. Of this comfort, which she doled out to him in daily portions, we have formerly given a specimen.

She was now standing with her back to the fire, and, with a pinch of snuff in her hand, was dealing forth this daily allowance of comfort to the squire, while he smoaked his afternoon pipe, when she received the above letter; which she had no sooner read than she delivered it to him, saying, "There, sir, there is an account of your lost sheep. Fortune hath again restored her to you, and if you will be governed by my advice, it is possible you may yet preserve her."

The squire had no sooner read the letter than he

leaped from his chair, threw his pipe into the fire, and gave a loud huzza for joy. He then summoned his servants, called for his boots, and ordered the Chevalier and several other horses to be saddled, and that parson Supple should be immediately sent for. Having done this, he turned to his sister, caught her in his arms, and gave her a close embrace, saying, "Zounds! you don't seem pleased; one would imagine you was sorry I have found the girl."

"Brother," answered she, "the deepest politicians, who see to the bottom, discover often a very different aspect of affairs, from what swims on the surface. It is true, indeed, things do look rather less desperate than they did formerly in Holland, when Lewis the Fourteenth was at the gates of Amsterdam; but there is a delicacy required in this matter, which you will pardon me, brother, if I suspect you want. There is a decorum to be used with a woman of figure, such as Lady Bellaston, brother, which requires a knowledge of the world, superior, I am afraid, to yours."

"Sister," cries the squire, "I know you have no opinion of my parts; but I'll shew you on this occasion who is a fool. Knowledge, quotha! I have not been in the country so long without having some knowledge of warrants and the law of the land. I know I may take my own wherever I can find it. Shew me my own daughter, and if I don't know how to come at her, I'll suffer you to call me a fool as long as I live. There be justices of peace in London, as well as in other places."

"I protest," cries she, "you make me tremble for the event of this matter, which, if you will proceed by my advice, you may bring to so good an issue. Do you really imagine, brother, that the house of a woman of figure is to be attacked by warrants and brutal justices of the peace? I will inform you how to proceed. As

soon as you arrive in town, and have got yourself into a decent dress (for indeed, brother, you have none at present fit to appear in), you must send your compliments to Lady Bellaston, and desire leave to wait on her. When you are admitted to her presence, as you certainly will be, and have told her your story, and have made proper use of my name (for I think you just know one another only by sight, though you are relations), I am confident she will withdraw her protection from my niece, who hath certainly imposed upon her. This is the only method.—Justices of peace, indeed! do you imagine any such event can arrive to a woman of figure in a civilised nation?"

"D—n their figures," cries the squire; "a pretty civilised nation, truly, where women are above the law. And what must I stand sending a parcel of compliments to a confounded whore, that keeps away a daughter from her own natural father? I tell you, sister, I am not so ignorant as you think me——I know you would have women above the law, but it is all a lye; I heard his lordship say at size, that no one is above the law. But this of yours is Hanover law, I suppose."

"Mr Western," said she, "I think you daily improve in ignorance.——I protest you are grown an arrant bear."

"No more a bear than yourself, sister Western," said the squire.—"Pox! you may talk of your civility an you will, I am sure you never shew any to me. I am no bear, no, nor no dog neither, though I know somebody, that is something that begins with a b; but pox! I will show you I have got more good manners than some folks."

"Mr Western," answered the lady, "you may say what you please, *je vous mesprise de tout mon cœur*. I shall not therefore be angry.——Besides, as my cousin,

with that odious Irish name, justly says, I have that regard for the honour and true interest of my family, and that concern for my niece, who is a part of it, that I have resolved to go to town myself upon this occasion; for indeed, indeed, brother, you are not a fit minister to be employed at a polite court.—Greenland —Greenland should always be the scene of the tramontane negociation."

"I thank Heaven," cries the squire, "I don't understand you now. You are got to your Hanoverian linguo. However, I'll shew you I scorn to be behindhand in civility with you; and as you are not angry for what I have said, so I am not angry for what you have said. Indeed I have always thought it a folly for relations to quarrel; and if they do now and then give a hasty word, why, people should give and take; for my part, I never bear malice; and I take it very kind of you to go up to London; for I never was there but twice in my life, and then I did not stay above a fortnight at a time, and to be sure I can't be expected to know much of the streets and the folks in that time. I never denied that you know'd all these matters better than I. For me to dispute that would be all as one as for you to dispute the management of a pack of dogs, or the finding a hare sitting, with me." —"Which I promise you," says she, "I never will." —"Well, and I promise you," returned he, "that I never will dispute the t'other."

Here then a league was struck (to borrow a phrase from the lady) between the contending parties; and now the parson arriving, and the horses being ready, the squire departed, having promised his sister to follow her advice, and she prepared to follow him the next day.

But having communicated these matters to the parson on the road, they both agreed that the prescribed

formalities might very well be dispensed with; and the squire, having changed his mind, proceeded in the manner we have already seen.

Chapter viii.

In which various misfortunes befel poor Jones.

AFFAIRS were in the aforesaid situation when Mrs Honour arrived at Mrs Miller's, and called Jones out from the company, as we have before seen, with whom, when she found herself alone, she began as follows:—

"O, my dear sir! how shall I get spirits to tell you; you are undone, sir, and my poor lady's undone, and I am undone." "Hath anything happened to Sophia?" cries Jones, staring like a madman. "All that is bad," cries Honour: "Oh, I shall never get such another lady! Oh that I should ever live to see this day!" At these words Jones turned pale as ashes, trembled, and stammered; but Honour went on—"O! Mr Jones, I have lost my lady for ever." "How? what! for Heaven's sake, tell me. O, my dear Sophia!" "You may well call her so," said Honour; "she was the dearest lady to me. I shall never have such another place."——"D—n your place!" cries Jones; "where is—what—what is become of my Sophia?" "Ay, to be sure," cries she, "servants may be d—n'd. It signifies nothing what becomes of them, though they are turned away, and ruined ever so much. To be sure they are not flesh and blood like other people. No, to be sure, it signifies nothing what becomes of them." "If you have any pity, any compassion," cries Jones, "I beg you will instantly tell me what hath happened

to Sophia?" "To be sure, I have more pity for you than you have for me," answered Honour; "I don't d—n you because you have lost the sweetest lady in the world. To be sure you are worthy to be pitied, and I am worthy to be pitied too: for, to be sure, if ever there was a good mistress——" "What hath happened?" cries Jones, in almost a raving fit. "What?—What?" said Honour: "Why, the worst that could have happened both for you and for me.—Her father is come to town, and hath carried her away from us both." Here Jones fell on his knees in thanksgiving that it was no worse. "No worse!" repeated Honour; "what could be worse for either of us? He carried her off, swearing she should marry Mr Blifil; that's for your comfort; and, for poor me, I am turned out of doors." "Indeed, Mrs Honour," answered Jones, "you frightened me out of my wits. I imagined some most dreadful sudden accident had happened to Sophia; something, compared to which, even seeing her married to Blifil would be a trifle; but while there is life there are hopes, my dear Honour. Women in this land of liberty, cannot be married by actual brutal force." "To be sure, sir," said she, "that's true. There may be some hopes for you; but alack-a-day! what hopes are there for poor me? And to be sure, sir, you must be sensible I suffer all this upon your account. All the quarrel the squire hath to me is for taking your part, as I have done, against Mr Blifil." "Indeed, Mrs Honour," answered he, "I am sensible of my obligations to you, and will leave nothing in my power undone to make you amends." "Alas! sir," said she, "what can make a servant amends for the loss of one place but the getting another altogether as good?" "Do not despair, Mrs Honour," said Jones, "I hope to reinstate you again in the same." "Alack-a-day, sir," said she, "how

can I flatter myself with such hopes when I know it is a thing impossible? for the squire is so set against me: and yet, if you should ever have my lady, as to be sure I now hopes heartily you will; for you are a generous, good-natured gentleman; and I am sure you loves her, and to be sure she loves you as dearly as her own soul; it is a matter in vain to deny it; because as why, everybody, that is in the least acquainted with my lady, must see it; for, poor dear lady, she can't dissemble: and if two people who loves one another a'n't happy, why who should be so? Happiness don't always depend upon what people has; besides, my lady has enough for both. To be sure, therefore, as one may say, it would be all the pity in the world to keep two such loviers asunder; nay, I am convinced, for my part, you will meet together at last; for, if it is to be, there is no preventing it. If a marriage is made in heaven, all the justices of peace upon earth can't break it off. To be sure I wishes that parson Supple had but a little more spirit, to tell the squire of his wickedness in endeavouring to force his daughter contrary to her liking; but then his whole dependance is on the squire; and so the poor gentleman, though he is a very religious good sort of man, and talks of the badness of such doings behind the squire's back, yet he dares not say his soul is his own to his face. To be sure I never saw him make so bold as just now; I was afeard the squire would have struck him. I would not have your honour be melancholy, sir, nor despair; things may go better, as long as you are sure of my lady, and that I am certain you may be; for she never will be brought to consent to marry any other man. Indeed I am terribly afeared the squire will do her a mischief in his passion, for he is a prodigious passionate gentleman; and I am afeared too the poor lady will be brought to break her heart, for she is as tender-hearted as a chicken. It is pity,

methinks, she had not a little of my courage. If I was in love with a young man, and my father offered to lock me up, I'd tear his eyes out but I'd come at him; but then there's a great fortune in the case, which it is in her father's power either to give her or not; that, to be sure, may make some difference."

Whether Jones gave strict attention to all the foregoing harangue, or whether it was for want of any vacancy in the discourse, I cannot determine; but he never once attempted to answer, nor did she once stop till Partridge came running into the room, and informed him that the great lady was upon the stairs.

Nothing could equal the dilemma to which Jones was now reduced. Honour knew nothing of any acquaintance that subsisted between him and Lady Bellaston, and she was almost the last person in the world to whom he would have communicated it. In this hurry and distress, he took (as is common enough) the worst course, and, instead of exposing her to the lady, which would have been of little consequence, he chose to expose the lady to her; he therefore resolved to hide Honour, whom he had but just time to convey behind the bed, and to draw the curtains.

The hurry in which Jones had been all day engaged on account of his poor landlady and her family, the terrors occasioned by Mrs Honour, and the confusion into which he was thrown by the sudden arrival of Lady Bellaston, had altogether driven former thoughts out of his head; so that it never once occurred to his memory to act the part of a sick man; which, indeed, neither the gaiety of his dress, nor the freshness of his countenance, would have at all supported.

He received her ladyship therefore rather agreeably to her desires than to her expectations, with all the good humour he could muster in his countenance, and without any real or affected appearance of the least disorder.

Lady Bellaston no sooner entered the room, than she squatted herself down on the bed: "So, my dear Jones," said she, "you find nothing can detain me long from you. Perhaps I ought to be angry with you, that I have neither seen nor heard from you all day; for I perceive your distemper would have suffered you to come abroad: nay, I suppose you have not sat in your chamber all day drest up like a fine lady to see company after a lying-in; but, however, don't think I intend to scold you; for I never will give you an excuse for the cold behaviour of a husband, by putting on the ill-humour of a wife."

"Nay, Lady Bellaston," said Jones, "I am sure your ladyship will not upbraid me with neglect of duty, when I only waited for orders. Who, my dear creature, hath reason to complain? Who missed an appointment last night, and left an unhappy man to expect, and wish, and sigh, and languish?"

"Do not mention it, my dear Mr Jones," cried she. "If you knew the occasion, you would pity me. In short, it is impossible to conceive what women of condition are obliged to suffer from the impertinence of fools, in order to keep up the farce of the world. I am glad, however, all your languishing and wishing have done you no harm; for you never looked better in your life. Upon my faith! Jones, you might at this instant sit for the picture of Adonis."

There are certain words of provocation which men of honour hold can properly be answered only by a blow. Among lovers possibly there may be some expressions which can be answered only by a kiss. Now the compliment which Lady Bellaston now made Jones seems to be of this kind, especially as it was attended with a look, in which the lady conveyed more soft ideas than it was possible to express with her tongue.

Jones was certainly at this instant in one of the most disagreeable and distressed situations imaginable; for, to carry on the comparison we made use of before, though the provocation was given by the lady, Jones could not receive satisfaction, nor so much as offer to ask it, in the presence of a third person; seconds in this kind of duels not being according to the law of arms. As this objection did not occur to Lady Bellaston, who was ignorant of any other woman being there but herself, she waited some time in great astonishment for an answer from Jones, who, conscious of the ridiculous figure he made, stood at a distance, and, not daring to give the proper answer, gave none at all. Nothing can be imagined more comic, nor yet more tragical, than this scene would have been if it had lasted much longer. The lady had already changed colour two or three times; had got up from the bed and sat down again, while Jones was wishing the ground to sink under him, or the house to fall on his head, when an odd accident freed him from an embarrassment out of which neither the eloquence of a Cicero, nor the politics of a Machiavel, could have delivered him, without utter disgrace.

This was no other than the arrival of young Nightingale, dead drunk; or rather in that state of drunkenness which deprives men of the use of their reason without depriving them of the use of their limbs.

Mrs Miller and her daughters were in bed, and Partridge was smoaking his pipe by the kitchen fire; so that he arrived at Mr Jones's chamber-door without any interruption. This he burst open, and was entering without any ceremony, when Jones started from his seat and ran to oppose him, which he did so effectually, that Nightingale never came far enough within the door to see who was sitting on the bed.

Nightingale had in reality mistaken Jones's apartment for that in which himself had lodged; he therefore strongly insisted on coming in, often swearing that he would not be kept from his own bed. Jones, however, prevailed over him, and delivered him into the hands of Partridge, whom the noise on the stairs soon summoned to his master's assistance.

And now Jones was unwillingly obliged to return to his own apartment, where at the very instant of his entrance he heard Lady Bellaston venting an exclamation, though not a very loud one; and at the same time saw her flinging herself into a chair in a vast agitation, which in a lady of a tender constitution would have been an hysteric fit.

In reality the lady, frightened with the struggle between the two men, of which she did not know what would be the issue, as she heard Nightingale swear many oaths he would come to his own bed, attempted to retire to her known place of hiding, which to her great confusion she found already occupied by another.

"Is this usage to be borne, Mr Jones?" cries the lady.—"Basest of men?——What wretch is this to whom you have exposed me?" "Wretch!" cries Honour, bursting in a violent rage from her place of concealment——"Marry come up!——Wretch forsooth?——as poor a wretch as I am, I am honest; this is more than some folks who are richer can say."

Jones, instead of applying himself directly to take off the edge of Mrs Honour's resentment, as a more experienced gallant would have done, fell to cursing his stars, and lamenting himself as the most unfortunate man in the world; and presently after, addressing himself to Lady Bellaston, he fell to some very absurd protestations of innocence. By this time the lady, having recovered the use of her reason, which she had

as ready as any woman in the world, especially on such occasions, calmly replied; "Sir, you need make no apologies, I see now who the person is; I did not at first know Mrs Honour: but now I do, I can suspect nothing wrong between her and you; and I am sure she is a woman of too good sense to put any wrong constructions upon my visit to you; I have been always her friend, and it may be in my power to be much more hereafter."

Mrs Honour was altogether as placable as she was passionate. Hearing, therefore, Lady Bellaston assume the soft tone, she likewise softened hers.——"I'm sure, madam," says she, "I have been always ready to acknowledge your ladyship's friendships to me; sure I never had so good a friend as your ladyship——and to be sure, now I see it is your ladyship that I spoke to, I could almost bite my tongue off for very mad.—I constructions upon your ladyship—to be sure it doth not become a servant as I am to think about such a great lady—I mean I was a servant: for indeed I am nobody's servant now, the more miserable wretch is me.—I have lost the best mistress——" Here Honour thought fit to produce a shower of tears.—"Don't cry, child," says the good lady; "ways perhaps may be found to make you amends. Come to me to-morrow morning." She then took up her fan which lay on the ground, and without even looking at Jones walked very majestically out of the room; there being a kind of dignity in the impudence of women of quality, which their inferiors vainly aspire to attain to in circumstances of this nature.

Jones followed her downstairs, often offering her his hand, which she absolutely refused him, and got into her chair without taking any notice of him as he stood bowing before her.

At his return upstairs, a long dialogue past between

him and Mrs Honour, while she was adjusting herself after the discomposure she had undergone. The subject of this was his infidelity to her young lady; on which she enlarged with great bitterness; but Jones at last found means to reconcile her, and not only so, but to obtain a promise of most inviolable secrecy, and that she would the next morning endeavour to find out Sophia, and bring him a further account of the proceedings of the squire.

Thus ended this unfortunate adventure to the satisfaction only of Mrs Honour; for a secret (as some of my readers will perhaps acknowledge from experience) is often a very valuable possession: and that not only to those who faithfully keep it, but sometimes to such as whisper it about till it come to the ears of every one except the ignorant person who pays for the supposed concealing of what is publickly known.

Chapter viij.

Short and sweet.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the obligations she had received from Jones, Mrs Miller could not forbear in the morning some gentle remonstrances for the hurricane which had happened the preceding night in his chamber. These were, however, so gentle and so friendly, professing, and indeed truly, to aim at nothing more than the real good of Mr Jones himself, that he, far from being offended, thankfully received the admonition of the good woman, expressed much concern for what had past, excused it as well as he could, and promised never more to bring the same disturbances into the house.

But though Mrs Miller did not refrain from a short

expostulation in private at their first meeting, yet the occasion of his being summoned downstairs that morning was of a much more agreeable kind, being indeed to perform the office of a father to Miss Nancy, and to give her in wedlock to Mr Nightingale, who was now ready drest, and full as sober as many of my readers will think a man ought to be who receives a wife in so imprudent a manner.

And here perhaps it may be proper to account for the escape which this young gentleman had made from his uncle, and for his appearance in the condition in which we have seen him the night before.

Now when the uncle had arrived at his lodgings with his nephew, partly to indulge his own inclinations (for he dearly loved his bottle), and partly to disqualify his nephew from the immediate execution of his purpose, he ordered wine to be set on the table; with which he so briskly plyed the young gentleman, that this latter, who, though not much used to drinking, did not detest it so as to be guilty of disobedience or want of complacence by refusing, was soon completely finished.

Just as the uncle had obtained this victory, and was preparing a bed for his nephew, a messenger arrived with a piece of news, which so entirely disconcerted and shocked him, that he in a moment lost all consideration for his nephew, and his whole mind became entirely taken up with his own concerns.

This sudden and afflicting news was no less than that his daughter had taken the opportunity of almost the first moment of his absence, and had gone off with a neighbouring young clergyman; against whom, though her father could have had but one objection, namely, that he was worth nothing, yet she had never thought proper to communicate her amour even to that father; and so artfully had she managed, that it had

never been once suspected by any, till now that it was consummated.

Old Mr Nightingale no sooner received this account, than in the utmost confusion he ordered a post-chaise to be instantly got ready, and, having recommended his nephew to the care of a servant, he directly left the house, scarce knowing what he did, nor whither he went.

The uncle thus departed, when the servant came to attend the nephew to bed, had waked him for that purpose, and had at last made him sensible that his uncle was gone, he, instead of accepting the kind offices tendered him, insisted on a chair being called; with this the servant, who had received no strict orders to the contrary, readily complied; and, thus being conducted back to the house of Mrs Miller, he had staggered up to Mr Jones's chamber, as hath been before recounted.

This bar of the uncle being now removed (though young Nightingale knew not as yet in what manner), and all parties being quickly ready, the mother, Mr Jones, Mr Nightingale, and his love, stept into a hackney-coach, which conveyed them to Doctors' Commons; where Miss Nancy was, in vulgar language, soon made an honest woman, and the poor mother became, in the purest sense of the word, one of the happiest of all human beings.

And now Mr Jones, having seen his good offices to that poor woman and her family brought to a happy conclusion, began to apply himself to his own concerns; but here, lest many of my readers should censure his folly for thus troubling himself with the affairs of others, and lest some few should think he acted more disinterestedly than indeed he did, we think proper to assure our reader, that he was so far from being unconcerned in this matter, that he had indeed a very

considerable interest in bringing it to that final consummation.

To explain this seeming paradox at once, he was one who could truly say with him in Terence, *Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.* He was never an indifferent spectator of the misery or happiness of any one; and he felt either the one or the other in great proportion as he himself contributed to either. He could not, therefore, be the instrument of raising a whole family from the lowest state of wretchedness to the highest pitch of joy without conveying great felicity to himself; more perhaps than worldly men often purchase to themselves by undergoing the most severe labour, and often by wading through the deepest iniquity.

Those readers who are of the same complexion with him will perhaps think this short chapter contains abundance of matter; while others may probably wish, short as it is, that it had been totally spared as impertinent to the main design, which I suppose they conclude is to bring Mr Jones to the gallows, or, if possible, to a more deplorable catastrophe.

Chapter ix.

Containing love-letters of several sorts.

MR JONES, at his return home, found the following letters lying on his table, which he luckily opened in the order they were sent.

LETTER I.

"Surely I am under some strange infatuation; I cannot keep my resolutions a moment, however strongly made or justly founded. Last night I resolved never to see you more; this morning I am willing to hear if

you can, as you say, clear up this affair. And yet I know that to be impossible. I have said everything to myself which you can invent.——Perhaps not. Perhaps your invention is stronger. Come to me, therefore, the moment you receive this. If you can forge an excuse I almost promise you to believe it. Betrayed too—— I will think no more.——Come to me directly.—— This is the third letter I have writ, the two former are burnt——I am almost inclined to burn this too ——I wish I may preserve my senses.——Come to me presently."

LETTER II.

"If you ever expect to be forgiven, or even suffered within my doors, come to me this instant."

LETTER III.

"I now find you was not at home when my notes came to your lodgings. The moment you receive this let me see you;——I shall not stir out; nor shall anybody be let in but yourself. Sure nothing can detain you long."

Jones had just read over these three billets when Mr Nightingale came into the room. "Well, Tom," said he, "any news from Lady Bellaston, after last night's adventure?" (for it was now no secret to any one in that house who the lady was). "The Lady Bellaston?" answered Jones very gravely.——"Nay, dear Tom," cries Nightingale, "don't be so reserved to your friends. Though I was too drunk to see her last night, I saw her at the masquerade. Do you think I am ignorant who the queen of the fairies is?" "And did you really then know the lady at the masquerade?" said Jones. "Yes, upon my soul, did I," said Nightingale, "and have given you twenty

hints of it since, though you seemed always so tender on that point, that I would not speak plainly. I fancy, my friend, by your extreme nicety in this matter, you are not so well acquainted with the character of the lady as with her person. Don't be angry, Tom, but upon my honour, you are not the first young fellow she hath debauched. Her reputation is in no danger, believe me."

Though Jones had no reason to imagine the lady to have been of the vestal kind when his amour began; yet, as he was thoroughly ignorant of the town, and had very little acquaintance in it, he had no knowledge of that character which is vulgarly called a demirep; that is to say, a woman who intrigues with every man she likes, under the name and appearance of virtue; and who, though some over-nice ladies will not be seen with her, is visited (as they term it) by the whole town, in short, whom everybody knows to be what nobody calls her.

When he found, therefore, that Nightingale was perfectly acquainted with his intrigue, and began to suspect that so scrupulous a delicacy as he had hitherto observed was not quite necessary on the occasion, he gave a latitude to his friend's tongue, and desired him to speak plainly what he knew, or had ever heard of the lady.

Nightingale, who, in many other instances, was rather too effeminate in his disposition, had a pretty strong inclination to tittle-tattle. He had no sooner, therefore, received a full liberty of speaking from Jones, than he entered upon a long narrative concerning the lady; which, as it contained many particulars highly to her dishonour, we have too great a tenderness for all women of condition to repeat. We would cautiously avoid giving an opportunity to the future commentators on our works, of making any malicious application and of

forcing us to be, against our will, the author of scandal, which never entered into our head.

Jones, having very attentively heard all that Nightingale had to say, fetched a deep sigh; which the other, observing, cried, "Heyday! why, thou art not in love, I hope! Had I imagined my stories would have affected you, I promise you should never have heard them." "O my dear friend!" cries Jones, "I am so entangled with this woman, that I know not how to extricate myself. In love, indeed! no, my friend, but I am under obligations to her, and very great ones. Since you know so much, I will be very explicit with you. It is owing, perhaps, solely to her, that I have not, before this, wanted a bit of bread. How can I possibly desert such a woman? and yet I must desert her, or be guilty of the blackest treachery to one who deserves infinitely better of me than she can; a woman, my Nightingale, for whom I have a passion which few can have an idea of. I am half distracted with doubts how to act." "And is this other, pray, an honourable mistress?" cries Nightingale. "Honourable!" answered Jones; "no breath ever yet durst sully her reputation. The sweetest air is not purer, the limpid stream not clearer, than her honour. She is all over, both in mind and body, consummate perfection. She is the most beautiful creature in the universe: and yet she is mistress of such noble elevated qualities, that, though she is never from my thoughts, I scarce ever think of her beauty but when I see it."—"And can you, my good friend," cries Nightingale, "with such an engagement as this upon your hands, hesitate a moment about quitting such a—" "Hold," said Jones, "no more abuse of her: I detest the thought of ingratitude." "Pooh!" answered the other, "you are not the first upon whom she hath conferred obligations of this kind. She is remarkably liberal where

she likes; though, let me tell you, her favours are so prudently bestowed, that they should rather raise a man's vanity than his gratitude." In short, Nightingale proceeded so far on this head, and told his friend so many stories of the lady, which he swore to the truth of, that he entirely removed all esteem for her from the breast of Jones; and his gratitude was lessened in proportion. Indeed, he began to look on all the favours he had received rather as wages than benefits, which depreciated not only her, but himself too in his own conceit, and put him quite out of humour with both. From this disgust, his mind, by a natural transition, turned towards Sophia; her virtue, her purity, her love to him, her sufferings on his account, filled all his thoughts, and made his commerce with Lady Bellaston appear still more odious. The result of all was, that, though his turning himself out of her service, in which light he now saw his affair with her, would be the loss of his bread; yet he determined to quit her, if he could but find a handsome pretence: which being communicated to his friend, Nightingale considered a little, and then said, "I have it, my boy! I have found out a sure method; propose marriage to her, and I would venture hanging upon the success." "Marriage?" cries Jones. "Ay, propose marriage," answered Nightingale, "and she will declare off in a moment. I knew a young fellow whom she kept formerly, who made the offer to her in earnest, and was presently turned off for his pains."

Jones declared he could not venture the experiment. "Perhaps," said he, "she may be less shocked at this proposal from one man than from another. And if she should take me at my word, where am I then? caught in my own trap, and undone for ever." "No;" answered Nightingale, "not if I can give you an expedient by which you may at any time get out of the trap."——"What expedient can that be?" replied Jones. "This," answered

Nightingale. "The young fellow I mentioned, who is one of the most intimate acquaintances I have in the world, is so angry with her for some ill offices she hath since done him, that I am sure he would, without any difficulty, give you a sight of her letters; upon which you may decently break with her; and declare off before the knot is tyed, if she should really be willing to tie it, which I am convinced she will not."

After some hesitation, Jones, upon the strength of this assurance, consented; but, as he swore he wanted the confidence to propose the matter to her face, he wrote the following letter, which Nightingale dictated:—

"MADAM,

"I am extremely concerned, that, by an unfortunate engagement abroad, I should have missed receiving the honour of your ladyship's commands the moment they came; and the delay which I must now suffer of vindicating myself to your ladyship greatly adds to this misfortune. O, Lady Bellaston! what a terror have I been in for fear your reputation should be exposed by these perverse accidents! There is one only way to secure it. I need not name what that is. Only permit me to say, that as your honour is as dear to me as my own, so my sole ambition is to have the glory of laying my liberty at your feet; and believe me when I assure you, I can never be made completely happy without you generously bestow on me a legal right of calling you mine for ever.—I am,

madam,
with most profound respect,
your ladyship's most obliged,
obedient, humble servant,
THOMAS JONES."

To this she presently returned the following answer:

"SIR,

"When I read over your serious epistle, I could, from its coldness and formality, have sworn that you already had the legal right you mention; nay, that we had for many years composed that monstrous animal a husband and wife. Do you really then imagine me a fool? or do you fancy yourself capable of so entirely persuading me out of my senses, that I should deliver my whole fortune into your power, in order to enable you to support your pleasures at my expense? Are these the proofs of love which I expected? Is this the return for——? but I scorn to upbraid you, and am in great admiration of your profound respect.

"*P.S.* I am prevented from revising:——Perhaps I have said more than I meant.——Come to me at eight this evening."

Jones, by the advice of his privy-council, replied:

"MADAM,

"It is impossible to express how much I am shocked at the suspicion you entertain of me. Can Lady Bellaston have conferred favours on a man whom she could believe capable of so base a design? or can she treat the most solemn tie of love with contempt? Can you imagine, madam, that if the violence of my passion, in an unguarded moment, overcame the tenderness which I have for your honour, I would think of indulging myself in the continuance of an intercourse which could not possibly escape long the notice of the world; and which, when discovered, must prove so fatal to your reputation? If such be your opinion of me, I must pray for a sudden opportunity of returning those pecuniary obligations, which I have been so unfortunate to receive at your hands; and for those of a more tender kind, I shall ever remain, &c." And so

concluded in the very words with which he had concluded the former letter.

The lady answered as follows:

"I see you are a villain! and I despise you from my soul. If you come here I shall not be at home."

Though Jones was well satisfied with his deliverance from a thraldom which those who have ever experienced it will, I apprehend, allow to be none of the lightest, he was not, however, perfectly easy in his mind. There was in this scheme too much of fallacy to satisfy one who utterly detested every species of falshood or dishonesty: nor would he, indeed, have submitted to put it in practice, had he not been involved in a distressful situation, where he was obliged to be guilty of some dishonour, either to the one lady or the other; and surely the reader will allow, that every good principle, as well as love, pleaded strongly in favour of Sophia.

Nightingale highly exulted in the success of his stratagem, upon which he received many thanks and much applause from his friend. He answered, "Dear Tom, we have conferred very different obligations on each other. To me you owe the regaining your liberty; to you I owe the loss of mine. But if you are as happy in the one instance as I am in the other, I promise you we are the two happiest fellows in England."

The two gentlemen were now summoned down to dinner, where Mrs Miller, who performed herself the office of cook, had exerted her best talents to celebrate the wedding of her daughter. This joyful circumstance she ascribed principally to the friendly behaviour of Jones, her whole soul was fired with gratitude towards him, and all her looks, words, and actions, were so busied in expressing it, that her daughter, and even

her new son-in-law, were very little objects of her consideration.

Dinner was just ended when Mrs Miller received a letter; but as we have had letters enow in this chapter, we shall communicate its contents in our next.

Chapter x.

Consisting partly of facts, and partly of observations upon them.

THE letter then which arrived at the end of the preceding chapter was from Mr Allworthy, and the purport of it was, his intention to come immediately to town, with his nephew Blifil, and a desire to be accommodated with his usual lodgings, which were the first floor for himself, and the second for his nephew.

The chearfulness which had before displayed itself in the countenance of the poor woman was a little clouded on this occasion. This news did indeed a good deal disconcert her. To requite so disinterested a match with her daughter, by presently turning her new son-in-law out of doors, appeared to her very unjustifiable on the one hand; and on the other, she could scarce bear the thoughts of making any excuse to Mr Allworthy, after all the obligations received from him, for depriving him of lodgings which were indeed strictly his due; for that gentleman, in conferring all his numberless benefits on others, acted by a rule diametrically opposite to what is practised by most generous people. He contrived, on all occasions, to hide his beneficence, not only from the world, but even from the object of it. He constantly used the words Lend and Pay, instead of Give; and by every

other method he could invent, always lessened with his tongue the favours he conferred, while he was heaping them with both his hands. When he settled the annuity of £50 a year therefore on Mrs Miller, he told her, "it was in consideration of always having her first-floor when he was in town (which he scarce ever intended to be), but that she might let it at any other time, for that he would always send her a month's warning." He was now, however, hurried to town so suddenly, that he had no opportunity of giving such notice; and this hurry probably prevented him, when he wrote for his lodgings, adding, if they were then empty; for he would most certainly have been well satisfied to have relinquished them, on a less sufficient excuse than what Mrs Miller could now have made.

But there are a sort of persons, who, as Prior excellently well remarks, direct their conduct by something

> Beyond the fix'd and settled rules
> Of vice and virtue in the schools,
> Beyond the letter of the law.

To these it is so far from being sufficient that their defence would acquit them at the Old Bailey, that they are not even contented, though conscience, the severest of all judges, should discharge them. Nothing short of the fair and honourable will satisfy the delicacy of their minds; and if any of their actions fall short of this mark, they mope and pine, are as uneasy and restless as a murderer, who is afraid of a ghost, or of the hangman.

Mrs Miller was one of these. She could not conceal her uneasiness at this letter; with the contents of which she had no sooner acquainted the company, and given some hints of her distress, than Jones, her good angel, presently relieved her anxiety. "As for myself, madam," said he, "my lodging is at your service at a moment's warning; and Mr Nightingale, I am

sure, as he cannot yet prepare a house fit to receive his lady, will consent to return to his new lodging, whither Mrs Nightingale will certainly consent to go." With which proposal both husband and wife instantly agreed.

The reader will easily believe, that the cheeks of Mrs Miller began again to glow with additional gratitude to Jones; but, perhaps, it may be more difficult to persuade him, that Mr Jones having in his last speech called her daughter Mrs Nightingale (it being the first time that agreeable sound had ever reached her ears), gave the fond mother more satisfaction, and warmed her heart more towards Jones, than his having dissipated her present anxiety.

The next day was then appointed for the removal of the new-married couple, and of Mr Jones, who was likewise to be provided for in the same house with his friend. And now the serenity of the company was again restored, and they past the day in the utmost chearfulness, all except Jones, who, though he outwardly accompanied the rest in their mirth, felt many a bitter pang on the account of his Sophia, which were not a little heightened by the news of Mr Blifil's coming to town (for he clearly saw the intention of his journey); and what greatly aggravated his concern was, that Mrs Honour, who had promised to inquire after Sophia, and to make her report to him early the next evening, had disappointed him.

In the situation that he and his mistress were in at this time, there were scarce any grounds for him to hope that he should hear any good news; yet he was as impatient to see Mrs Honour as if he had expected she would bring him a letter with an assignation in it from Sophia, and bore the disappointment as ill. Whether this impatience arose from that natural weakness of the human mind, which makes it desirous to know the worst, and renders uncertainty the most

intolerable of pains; or whether he still flattered himself with some secret hopes, we will not determine. But that it might be the last, whoever has loved cannot but know. For of all the powers exercised by this passion over our minds, one of the most wonderful is that of supporting hope in the midst of despair. Difficulties, improbabilities, nay, impossibilities, are quite overlooked by it; so that to any man extremely in love, may be applied what Addison says of Cæsar,

"The Alps, and Pyrenæans, sink before him!"

Yet it is equally true, that the same passion will sometimes make mountains of molehills, and produce despair in the midst of hope; but these cold fits last not long in good constitutions. Which temper Jones was now in, we leave the reader to guess, having no exact information about it; but this is certain, that he had spent two hours in expectation, when, being unable any longer to conceal his uneasiness, he retired to his room; where his anxiety had almost made him frantick, when the following letter was brought him from Mrs Honour, with which we shall present the reader *verbatim et literatim.*

"Sir,

"I shud sartenly haf kaled on you a cordin too mi prommiss haddunt itt bin that hur lashipp prevent mee; for to bee sur, Sir, you nose very well that evere persun must luk furst at ome, and sartenly such anuther offar mite not have ever hapned, so as I shud ave bin justly to blam, had I not excepted of it when her lashipp was so veri kind as to offar to mak mee hur one uman without mi ever askin any such thing, to be sur shee is won of thee best ladis in thee wurld, and pepil who sase to the kontrari must bee veri wiket pepil in thare harts. To bee sur if ever I ave sad any thing of that

kine it as bin thru ignorens, and I am hartili sorri for it. I nose your onur to be a genteelman of more onur and onesty, if I ever said ani such thing, to repete it to hurt a pore servant that as alwais add thee gratest respect in thee wurld for ure onur. To be sur won shud kepe wons tung within wons teeth, for no boddi nose what may hapen; and to bee sur if ani boddi ad tolde mee yesterday, that I shud haf bin in so gud a plase to day, I shud not haf beleeved it; for to be sur I never was a dremd of any such thing, nor shud I ever have soft after ani other bodi's plase; but as her lashipp wass so kine of her one a cord too give it mee without askin, to be sur Mrs Etoff herself, nor no other boddi can blam mee for exceptin such a thing when it fals in mi waye. I beg ure Onur not to menshion ani thing of what I haf sad, for I wish ure Onur all thee gud luk in the wurld; and I don't cuestion butt thatt u will haf Madam Sofia in the end; butt ass to miself ure onur nose I kant bee of ani farder sarvis to u in that matar, nou bein under thee cumand off anuther parson, and nott mi one mistress, I begg ure Onur to say nothing of what past, and belive me to be, sir, ure Onur's umble servant to cumand till deth,

"Honour Blackmore."

Various were the conjectures which Jones entertained on this step of Lady Bellaston; who, in reality, had little farther design than to secure within her own house the repository of a secret, which she chose should make no farther progress than it had made already; but mostly, she desired to keep it from the ears of Sophia; for though that young lady was almost the only one who would never have repeated it again, her ladyship could not persuade herself of this; since, as she now hated poor Sophia with most implacable hatred, she conceived a reciprocal hatred to herself to

be lodged in the tender breast of our heroine, where no such passion had ever yet found an entrance.

While Jones was terrifying himself with the apprehension of a thousand dreadful machinations, and deep political designs, which he imagined to be at the bottom of the promotion of Honour, Fortune, who hitherto seems to have been an utter enemy to his match with Sophia, tried a new method to put a final end to it, by throwing a temptation in his way, which in his present desperate situation it seemed unlikely he should be able to resist.

Chapter xi.

Containing curious, but not unprecedented matter.

THERE was a lady, one Mrs Hunt, who had often seen Jones at the house where he lodged, being intimately acquainted with the women there, and indeed a very great friend to Mrs Miller. Her age was about thirty, for she owned six-and-twenty; her face and person very good, only inclining a little too much to be fat. She had been married young by her relations to an old Turkey merchant, who, having got a great fortune, had left off trade. With him she lived without reproach, but not without pain, in a state of great self-denial, for about twelve years; and her virtue was rewarded by his dying and leaving her very rich. The first year of her widowhood was just at an end, and she had past it in a good deal of retirement, seeing only a few particular friends, and dividing her time between her devotions and novels, of which she was always extremely fond. Very good health, a very warm constitution, and a good deal of religion, made it absolutely necessary for

her to marry again; and she resolved to please herself in her second husband, as she had done her friends in the first. From her the following billet was brought to Jones:—

"SIR,

"From the first day I saw you, I doubt my eyes have told you too plainly that you were not indifferent to me; but neither my tongue nor my hand should have ever avowed it, had not the ladies of the family where you are lodged given me such a character of you, and told me such proofs of your virtue and goodness, as convince me you are not only the most agreeable, but the most worthy of men. I have also the satisfaction to hear from them, that neither my person, understanding, or character, are disagreeable to you. I have a fortune sufficient to make us both happy, but which cannot make me so without you. In thus disposing of myself, I know I shall incur the censure of the world; but if I did not love you more than I fear the world, I should not be worthy of you. One only difficulty stops me: I am informed you are engaged in a commerce of gallantry with a woman of fashion. If you think it worth while to sacrifice that to the possession of me, I am yours; if not, forget my weakness, and let this remain an eternal secret between you and

"ARABELLA HUNT."

At the reading of this, Jones was put into a violent flutter. His fortune was then at a very low ebb, the source being stopt from which hitherto he had been supplied. Of all he had received from Lady Bellaston, not above five guineas remained; and that very morning he had been dunned by a tradesman for twice that sum. His honourable mistress was in the hands of her father,

and he had scarce any hopes ever to get her out of them again. To be subsisted at her expense, from that little fortune she had independent of her father, went much against the delicacy both of his pride and his love. This lady's fortune would have been exceeding convenient to him, and he could have no objection to her in any respect. On the contrary, he liked her as well as he did any woman except Sophia. But to abandon Sophia, and marry another, that was impossible; he could not think of it upon any account. Yet why should he not, since it was plain she could not be his? Would it not be kinder to her, than to continue her longer engaged in a hopeless passion for him? Ought he not to do so in friendship to her? This notion prevailed some moments, and he had almost determined to be false to her from a high point of honour: but that refinement was not able to stand very long against the voice of nature, which cried in his heart that such friendship was treason to love. At last he called for pen, ink, and paper, and writ as follows to Mrs Hunt:—

"MADAM,

"It would be but a poor return to the favour you have done me to sacrifice any gallantry to the possession of you, and I would certainly do it, though I were not disengaged, as at present I am, from any affair of that kind. But I should not be the honest man you think me, if I did not tell you that my affections are engaged to another, who is a woman of virtue, and one that I never can leave, though it is probable I shall never possess her. God forbid that, in return of your kindness to me, I should do you such an injury as to give you my hand when I cannot give my heart. No; I had much rather starve than be guilty of that. Even though my mistress were married to another, I would

not marry you unless my heart had entirely effaced all impressions of her. Be assured that your secret was not more safe in your own breast, than in that of your most obliged, and grateful humble servant,

"T. JONES."

When our heroe had finished and sent this letter, he went to his scrutore, took out Miss Western's muff, kissed it several times, and then strutted some turns about his room, with more satisfaction of mind than ever any Irishman felt in carrying off a fortune of fifty thousand pounds.

Chapter xii.

A discovery made by Partridge.

WHILE Jones was exulting in the consciousness of his integrity, Partridge came capering into the room, as was his custom when he brought, or fancied he brought, any good tidings. He had been despatched that morning by his master, with orders to endeavour, by the servants of Lady Bellaston, or by any other means, to discover whither Sophia had been conveyed; and he now returned, and with a joyful countenance told our heroe that he had found the lost bird. "I have seen, sir," says he, "Black George, the gamekeeper, who is one of the servants whom the squire hath brought with him to town. I knew him presently, though I have not seen him these several years; but you know, sir, he is a very remarkable man, or, to use a purer phrase, he hath a most remarkable beard, the largest and blackest I ever saw. It was some time, however, before Black George could recollect me." "Well, but what is your good news?"

cries Jones; "what do you know of my Sophia?" "You shall know presently, sir," answered Partridge, "I am coming to it as fast as I can. You are so impatient, sir, you would come at the infinitive mood before you can get to the imperative. As I was saying, sir, it was some time before he recollected my face."—"Confound your face!" cries Jones, "what of my Sophia?" "Nay, sir," answered Partridge, "I know nothing more of Madam Sophia than what I am going to tell you; and I should have told you all before this if you had not interrupted me; but if you look so angry at me you will frighten all of it out of my head, or, to use a purer phrase, out of my memory. I never saw you look so angry since the day we left Upton, which I shall remember if I was to live a thousand years."——"Well, pray go on your own way," said Jones: "you are resolved to make me mad I find." "Not for the world," answered Partridge, "I have suffered enough for that already; which, as I said, I shall bear in my remembrance the longest day I have to live." "Well, but Black George?" cries Jones. "Well, sir, as I was saying, it was a long time before he could recollect me; for, indeed, I am very much altered since I saw him. *Non sum qualis eram.* I have had troubles in the world, and nothing alters a man so much as grief. I have heard it will change the colour of a man's hair in a night. However, at last, know me he did, that's sure enough; for we are both of an age, and were at the same charity school. George was a great dunce, but no matter for that; all men do not thrive in the world according to their learning. I am sure I have reason to say so; but it will be all one a thousand years hence. Well, sir, where was I?——O—well, we no sooner knew each other, than, after many hearty shakes by the hand, we agreed to go to an alehouse and take a pot, and by

good luck the beer was some of the best I have met with since I have been in town. Now, sir, I am coming to the point; for no sooner did I name you, and told him that you and I came to town together, and had lived together ever since, than he called for another pot, and swore he would drink to your health; and indeed he drank your health so heartily that I was overjoyed to see there was so much gratitude left in the world; and after we had emptied that pot I said I would be my pot too, and so we drank another to your health; and then I made haste home to tell you the news."

"What news?" cries Jones, "you have not mentioned a word of my Sophia!" "Bless me! I had like to have forgot that. Indeed, we mentioned a great deal about young Madam Western, and George told me all; that Mr Blifil is coming to town in order to be married to her. He had best make haste then, says I, or somebody will have her before he comes; and, indeed, says I, Mr Seagrim, it is a thousand pities somebody should not have her; for he certainly loves her above all the women in the world. I would have both you and she know, that it is not for her fortune he follows her; for I can assure you, as to matter of that, there is another lady, one of much greater quality and fortune than she can pretend to, who is so fond of somebody that she comes after him day and night."

Here Jones fell into a passion with Partridge, for having, as he said, betrayed him; but the poor fellow answered, he had mentioned no name: "Besides, sir," said he, "I can assure you George is sincerely your friend, and wished Mr Blifil at the devil more than once; nay, he said he would do anything in his power upon earth to serve you; and so I am convinced he will. Betray you, indeed! why, I question whether you have a better friend than George upon earth,

except myself, or one that would go farther to serve you."

"Well," says Jones, a little pacified, "you say this fellow, who, I believe, indeed, is enough inclined to be my friend, lives in the same house with Sophia?"

"In the same house!" answered Partridge; "why, sir, he is one of the servants of the family, and very well drest I promise you he is; if it was not for his black beard you would hardly know him."

"One service then at least he may do me," says Jones: "sure he can certainly convey a letter to my Sophia."

"You have hit the nail *ad unguem*," cries Partridge; "how came I not to think of it? I will engage he shall do it upon the very first mentioning."

"Well, then," said Jones, "do you leave me at present, and I will write a letter, which you shall deliver to him to-morrow morning; for I suppose you know where to find him."

"O yes, sir," answered Partridge, "I shall certainly find him again; there is no fear of that. The liquor is too good for him to stay away long. I make no doubt but he will be there every day he stays in town."

"So you don't know the street then where my Sophia is lodged?" cries Jones.

"Indeed, sir, I do," says Partridge.

"What is the name of the street?" cries Jones.

"The name, sir? why, here, sir, just by," answered Partridge, "not above a street or two off. I don't, indeed, know the very name; for, as he never told me, if I had asked, you know, it might have put some suspicion into his head. No, no, sir, let me alone for that. I am too cunning for that, I promise you."

"Thou art most wonderfully cunning, indeed," replied Jones; "however, I will write to my charmer, since I

believe you will be cunning enough to find him to-morrow at the alehouse."

And now, having dismissed the sagacious Partridge, Mr Jones sat himself down to write, in which employment we shall leave him for a time. And here we put an end to the fifteenth book.

BOOK XVI.

CONTAINING THE SPACE OF FIVE DAYS.

Chapter i.

Of prologues.

I HAVE heard of a dramatic writer who used to say, he would rather write a play than a prologue; in like manner, I think, I can with less pains write one of the books of this history than the prefatory chapter to each of them.

To say the truth, I believe many a hearty curse hath been devoted on the head of that author who first instituted the method of prefixing to his play that portion of matter which is called the prologue; and which at first was part of the piece itself, but of latter years hath had usually so little connexion with the drama before which it stands, that the prologue to one play might as well serve for any other. Those indeed of more modern date, seem all to be written on the same three topics, viz., an abuse of the taste of the town, a condemnation of all contemporary authors, and an eulogium on the performance just about to be represented. The sentiments in all these are very little varied, nor is it possible they should; and indeed I have often wondered at the great invention of authors, who have been capable of finding such various phrases to express the same thing.

In like manner I apprehend, some future historian (if any one shall do me the honour of imitating my manner) will, after much scratching his pate, bestow some good wishes on my memory, for having first established these several initial chapters; most of which, like modern prologues, may as properly be prefixed to any other book in this history as to that which they introduce, or indeed to any other history as to this.

But however authors may suffer by either of these inventions, the reader will find sufficient emolument in the one as the spectator hath long found in the other.

First, it is well known that the prologue serves the critic for an opportunity to try his faculty of hissing, and to tune his cat-call to the best advantage; by which means, I have known those musical instruments so well prepared, that they have been able to play in full concert at the first rising of the curtain.

The same advantages may be drawn from these chapters, in which the critic will be always sure of meeting with something that may serve as a whetstone to his noble spirit; so that he may fall with a more hungry appetite for censure on the history itself. And here his sagacity must make it needless to observe how artfully these chapters are calculated for that excellent purpose; for in these we have always taken care to intersperse somewhat of the sour or acid kind, in order to sharpen and stimulate the said spirit of criticism.

Again, the indolent reader, as well as spectator, finds great advantage from both these; for, as they are not obliged either to see the one or read the others, and both the play and the book are thus protracted, by the former they have a quarter of an hour longer allowed them to sit at dinner, and by the latter they have the advantage of beginning to read at the fourth or fifth page instead of the first, a matter by no means of trivial consequence to persons who read books with no other

view than to say they have read them, a more general motive to reading than is commonly imagined; and from which not only law books, and good books, but the pages of Homer and Virgil, of Swift and Cervantes, have been often turned over.

Many other are the emoluments which arise from both these, but they are for the most part so obvious, that we shall not at present stay to enumerate them; especially since it occurs to us that the principal merit of both the prologue and the preface is that they be short.

Chapter ij.

A whimsical adventure which befel the squire, with the distressed situation of Sophia.

WE must now convey the reader to Mr Western's lodgings, which were in Piccadilly, where he was placed by the recommendation of the landlord at the Hercules Pillars at Hyde Park Corner; for at the inn, which was the first he saw on his arrival in town, he placed his horses, and in those lodgings, which were the first he heard of, he deposited himself.

Here, when Sophia alighted from the hackney-coach, which brought her from the house of Lady Bellaston, she desired to retire to the apartment provided for her; to which her father very readily agreed, and whither he attended her himself. A short dialogue, neither very material nor pleasant to relate minutely, then passed between them, in which he pressed her vehemently to give her consent to the marriage with Blifil, who, as he acquainted her, was to be in town in a few days; but, instead of complying, she gave a more peremptory and resolute refusal than she had ever done before.

This so incensed her father, that after many bitter vows, that he would force her to have him whether she would or no, he departed from her with many hard words and curses, locked the door, and put the key into his pocket.

While Sophia was left with no other company than what attend the closest state prisoner, namely, fire and candle, the squire sat down to regale himself over a bottle of wine, with his parson and the landlord of the Hercules Pillars, who, as the squire said, would make an excellent third man, and could inform them of the news of the town, and how affairs went; for to be sure, says he, he knows a great deal, since the horses of many of the quality stand at his house.

In this agreeable society Mr Western past that evening and great part of the succeeding day, during which period nothing happened of sufficient consequence to find a place in this history. All this time Sophia past by herself; for her father swore she should never come out of her chamber alive, unless she first consented to marry Blifil; nor did he ever suffer the door to be unlocked, unless to convey her food, on which occasions he always attended himself.

The second morning after his arrival, while he and the parson were at breakfast together on a toast and tankard, he was informed that a gentleman was below to wait on him.

"A gentleman!" quoth the squire, "who the devil can he be? Do, doctor, go down and see who 'tis. Mr Blifil can hardly be come to town yet.—Go down, do, and know what his business is."

The doctor returned with an account that it was a very well-drest man, and by the ribbon in his hat he took him for an officer of the army; that he said he had some particular business, which he could deliver to none but Mr Western himself.

"An officer!" cries the squire; "what can any such fellow have to do with me? If he wants an order for baggage-waggons, I am no justice of peace here, nor can I grant a warrant.—Let un come up then, if he must speak to me."

A very genteel man now entered the room; who, having made his compliments to the squire, and desired the favour of being alone with him, delivered himself as follows:—

"Sir, I come to wait upon you by the command of my Lord Fellamar; but with a very different message from what I suppose you expect, after what past the other night."

"My lord who?" cries the squire; "I never heard the name o'un."

"His lordship," said the gentleman, "is willing to impute everything to the effect of liquor, and the most trifling acknowledgment of that kind will set everything right; for as he hath the most violent attachment to your daughter, you, sir, are the last person upon earth from whom he would resent an affront; and happy is it for you both that he hath given such public demonstrations of his courage as to be able to put up an affair of this kind without danger of any imputation on his honour. All he desires, therefore, is, that you will before me make some acknowledgment; the slightest in the world will be sufficient; and he intends this afternoon to pay his respects to you, in order to obtain your leave of visiting the young lady on the footing of a lover."

"I don't understand much of what you say, sir," said the squire; "but I suppose, by what you talk about my daughter, that this is the lord which my cousin, Lady Bellaston, mentioned to me, and said something about his courting my daughter. If so be that how that be the case—you may give my service

to his lordship, and tell un the girl is disposed of already."

"Perhaps, sir," said the gentleman, "you are not sufficiently apprized of the greatness of this offer. I believe such a person, title, and fortune would be nowhere refused."

"Lookee, sir," answered the squire; "to be very plain, my daughter is bespoke already; but if she was not, I would not marry her to a lord upon any account; I hate all lords; they are a parcel of courtiers and Hanoverians, and I will have nothing to do with them."

"Well, sir," said the gentleman, "if that is your resolution, the message I am to deliver to you is that my lord desires the favour of your company this morning in Hyde Park."

"You may tell my lord," answered the squire, "that I am busy and cannot come. I have enough to look after at home, and can't stir abroad on any account."

"I am sure, sir," quoth the other, "you are too much a gentleman to send such a message; you will not, I am convinced, have it said of you, that, after having affronted a noble peer, you refuse him satisfaction. His lordship would have been willing, from his great regard to the young lady, to have made up matters in another way; but unless he is to look on you as a father, his honour will not suffer his putting up such an indignity as you must be sensible you offered him."

"I offered him!" cries the squire; "it is a d—n'd lie! I never offered him anything."

Upon these words the gentleman returned a very short verbal rebuke, and this he accompanied at the same time with some manual remonstrances, which no sooner reached the ears of Mr Western, than that

worthy squire began to caper very briskly about the room, bellowing at the same time with all his might, as if desirous to summon a greater number of spectators to behold his agility.

The parson, who had left great part of the tankard unfinished, was not retired far; he immediately attended therefore on the squire's vociferation, crying, "Bless me! sir, what's the matter?"—"Matter!" quoth the squire, "here's a highwayman, I believe, who wants to rob and murder me—for he hath fallen upon me with that stick there in his hand, when I wish I may be d—n'd if I gid un the least provocation."

"How, sir," said the captain, "did you not tell me I lyed?"

"No, as I hope to be saved," answered the squire, "—I believe I might say, 'Twas a lie that I had offered any affront to my lord—but I never said the word, 'you lie.'—I understand myself better, and you might have understood yourself better than to fall upon a naked man. If I had a stick in my hand, you would not have dared strike me. I'd have knocked thy lantern jaws about thy ears. Come down into yard this minute, and I'll take a bout with thee at single stick for a broken head, that I will; or I will go into naked room and box thee for a belly-full. At unt half a man, at unt, I'm sure."

The captain, with some indignation, replied, "I see, sir, you are below my notice, and I shall inform his lordship you are below his. I am sorry I have dirtied my fingers with you." At which words he withdrew, the parson interposing to prevent the squire from stopping him, in which he easily prevailed, as the other, though he made some efforts for the purpose, did not seem very violently bent on success. However, when the captain was departed, the squire sent many curses

and some menaces after him; but as these did not set out from his lips till the officer was at the bottom of the stairs, and grew louder and louder as he was more and more remote, they did not reach his ears, or at least did not retard his departure.

Poor Sophia, however, who, in her prison, heard all her father's outcries from first to last, began now first to thunder with her foot, and afterwards to scream as loudly as the old gentleman himself had done before, though in a much sweeter voice. These screams soon silenced the squire, and turned all his consideration towards his daughter, whom he loved so tenderly, that the least apprehension of any harm happening to her, threw him presently into agonies; for, except in that single instance in which the whole future happiness of her life was concerned, she was sovereign mistress of his inclinations.

Having ended his rage against the captain, with swearing he would take the law of him, the squire now mounted upstairs to Sophia, whom, as soon as he had unlocked and opened the door, he found all pale and breathless. The moment, however, that she saw her father, she collected all her spirits, and, catching him hold by the hand, she cryed passionately, "O my dear sir, I am almost frightened to death! I hope to heaven no harm hath happened to you." "No, no," cries the squire, "no great harm. The rascal hath not hurt me much, but rat me if I don't ha the la o' un." "Pray, dear sir," says she, "tell me what's the matter; who is it that hath insulted you?" "I don't know the name o' un," answered Western; "some officer fellow, I suppose, that we are to pay for beating us; but I'll make him pay this bout, if the rascal hath got anything, which I suppose he hath not. For thof he was drest out so vine, I question whether he had got a voot of land in the world." "But, dear sir," cries she,

"what was the occasion of your quarrel?" "What should it be, Sophy," answered the squire, "but about you, Sophy? All my misfortunes are about you; you will be the death of your poor father at last. Here's a varlet of a lord, the Lord knows who, forsooth! who hath a taan a liking to you, and because I would not gi un my consent, he sent me a kallenge. Come, do be a good girl, Sophy, and put an end to all your father's troubles; come, do consent to ha un; he will be in town within this day or two; do but promise me to marry un as soon as he comes, and you will make me the happiest man in the world, and I will make you the happiest woman; you shall have the finest cloaths in London, and the finest jewels, and a coach and six at your command. I promised Allworthy already to give up half my estate—odrabbet it! I should hardly stick at giving up the whole." "Will my papa be so kind," says she, "as to hear me speak?"—"Why wout ask, Sophy?" cries he, "when dost know I had rather hear thy voice than the musick of the best pack of dogs in England.—Hear thee, my dear little girl! I hope I shall hear thee as long as I live; for if I was ever to lose that pleasure, I would not gee a brass varden to live a moment longer. Indeed, Sophy, you do not know how I love you, indeed you don't, or you never could have run away and left your poor father, who hath no other joy, no other comfort upon earth, but his little Sophy." At these words the tears stood in his eyes; and Sophia (with the tears streaming from hers) answered, "Indeed, my dear papa, I know you have loved me tenderly, and heaven is my witness how sincerely I have returned your affection; nor could anything but an apprehension of being forced into the arms of this man have driven me to run from a father whom I love so passionately, that I would, with pleasure,

sacrifice my life to his happiness; nay, I have endeavoured to reason myself into doing more, and had almost worked up a resolution to endure the most miserable of all lives, to comply with your inclination. It was that resolution alone to which I could not force my mind; nor can I ever." Here the squire began to look wild, and the foam appeared at his lips, which Sophia, observing, begged to be heard out, and then proceeded: "If my father's life, his health, or any real happiness of his was at stake, here stands your resolved daughter; may heaven blast me if there is a misery I would not suffer to preserve you!—No, that most detested, most loathsome of all lots would I embrace. I would give my hand to Blifil for your sake."—"I tell thee, it will preserve me," answers the father; "it will give me health, happiness, life, everything.—Upon my soul I shall die if dost refuse me; I shall break my heart, I shall, upon my soul."—"Is it possible," says she, "you can have such a desire to make me miserable?"—"I tell thee noa," answered he loudly, "d—n me if there is a thing upon earth I would not do to see thee happy."—"And will not my dear papa allow me to have the least knowledge of what will make me so? If it be true that happiness consists in opinion, what must be my condition, when I shall think myself the most miserable of all the wretches upon earth?" "Better think yourself so," said he, "than know it by being married to a poor bastardly vagabond." "If it will content you, sir," said Sophia, "I will give you the most solemn promise never to marry him, nor any other, while my papa lives, without his consent. Let me dedicate my whole life to your service; let me be again your poor Sophy, and my whole business and pleasure be, as it hath been, to please and divert you." "Lookee, Sophy," answered the squire, "I am not to be choused in this

manner. Your aunt Western would then have reason to think me the fool she doth. No, no, Sophy, I'd have you to know I have a got more wisdom, and know more of the world, than to take the word of a woman in a matter where a man is concerned." "How, sir, have I deserved this want of confidence?" said she; "have I ever broke a single promise to you? or have I ever been found guilty of a falsehood from my cradle?" "Lookee, Sophy," cries he; "that's neither here nor there. I am determined upon this match, and have him you shall, d—n me if shat unt. D—n me if shat unt, though dost hang thyself the next morning." At repeating which words he clinched his fist, knit his brows, bit his lips, and thundered so loud, that the poor afflicted, terrified Sophia sunk trembling into her chair, and, had not a flood of tears come immediately to her relief, perhaps worse had followed.

Western beheld the deplorable condition of his daughter with no more contrition or remorse than the turnkey of Newgate feels at viewing the agonies of a tender wife, when taking her last farewell of her condemned husband; or rather he looked down on her with the same emotions which arise in an honest fair tradesman, who sees his debtor dragged to prison for £10, which, though a just debt, the wretch is wickedly unable to pay. Or, to hit the case still more nearly, he felt the same compunction with a bawd, when some poor innocent, whom she hath ensnared into her hands, falls into fits at the first proposal of what is called seeing company. Indeed this resemblance would be exact, was it not that the bawd hath an interest in what she doth, and the father, though perhaps he may blindly think otherwise, can, in reality, have none in urging his daughter to almost an equal prostitution.

In this condition he left his poor Sophia, and, departing with a very vulgar observation on the effect of tears, he locked the room, and returned to the parson, who said everything he durst in behalf of the young lady, which, though perhaps it was not quite so much as his duty required, yet was it sufficient to throw the squire into a violent rage, and into many indecent reflections on the whole body of the clergy, which we have too great an honour for that sacred function to commit to paper.

Chapter iij.

What happened to Sophia during her confinement.

THE landlady of the house where the squire lodged had begun very early to entertain a strange opinion of her guests. However, as she was informed that the squire was a man of vast fortune, and as she had taken care to exact a very extraordinary price for her rooms, she did not think proper to give any offence; for, though she was not without some concern for the confinement of poor Sophia, of whose great sweetness of temper and affability the maid of the house had made so favourable a report, which was confirmed by all the squire's servants, yet she had much more concern for her own interest than to provoke one, whom, as she said, she perceived to be a very hastish kind of a gentleman.

Though Sophia eat but little, yet she was regularly served with her meals; indeed, I believe, if she had liked any one rarity, that the squire, however angry, would have spared neither pains nor cost to have procured it for her; since, however strange it may appear to some of my readers, he really doated on his daughter,

and to give her any kind of pleasure was the highest satisfaction of his life.

The dinner-hour being arrived, Black George carried her up a pullet, the squire himself (for he had sworn not to part with the key) attending the door. As George deposited the dish, some compliments passed between him and Sophia (for he had not seen her since she left the country, and she treated every servant with more respect than some persons shew to those who are in a very slight degree their inferiors). Sophia would have had him take the pullet back, saying, she could not eat; but George begged her to try, and particularly recommended to her the eggs, of which he said it was full.

All this time the squire was waiting at the door; but George was a great favourite with his master, as his employment was in concerns of the highest nature, namely, about the game, and was accustomed to take many liberties. He had officiously carried up the dinner, being, as he said, very desirous to see his young lady; he made therefore no scruple of keeping his master standing above ten minutes, while civilities were passing between him and Sophia, for which he received only a good-humoured rebuke at the door when he returned.

The eggs of pullets, partridges, pheasants, &c., were, as George well knew, the most favourite dainties of Sophia. It was therefore no wonder that he, who was a very good-natured fellow, should take care to supply her with this kind of delicacy, at a time when all the servants in the house were afraid she would be starved; for she had scarce swallowed a single morsel in the last forty hours.

Though vexation hath not the same effect on all persons as it usually hath on a widow, whose appetite it often renders sharper than it can be rendered by the

air on Bansted Downs, or Salisbury Plain; yet the sublimest grief, notwithstanding what some people may say to the contrary, will eat at last. And Sophia, herself, after some little consideration, began to dissect the fowl, which she found to be as full of eggs as George had reported it.

But, if she was pleased with these, it contained something which would have delighted the Royal Society much more; for if a fowl with three legs be so invaluable a curiosity, when perhaps time hath produced a thousand such, at what price shall we esteem a bird which so totally contradicts all the laws of animal œconomy, as to contain a letter in its belly? Ovid tells us of a flower into which Hyacinthus was metamorphosed, that bears letters on its leaves, which Virgil recommended as a miracle to the Royal Society of his day; but no age nor nation hath ever recorded a bird with a letter in its maw.

But though a miracle of this kind might have engaged all the *Académies des Sciences* in Europe, and perhaps in a fruitless enquiry; yet the reader, by barely recollecting the last dialogue which passed between Messieurs Jones and Partridge, will be very easily satisfied from whence this letter came, and how it found its passage into the fowl.

Sophia, notwithstanding her long fast, and notwithstanding her favourite dish was there before her, no sooner saw the letter than she immediately snatched it up, tore it open, and read as follows:—

"MADAM,

"Was I not sensible to whom I have the honour of writing, I should endeavour, however difficult, to paint the horrors of my mind at the account brought me by Mrs Honour; but as tenderness alone can have any true idea of the pangs which tenderness is capable of

feeling, so can this most amiable quality, which my Sophia possesses in the most eminent degree, sufficiently inform her what her Jones must have suffered on this melancholy occasion. Is there a circumstance in the world which can heighten my agonies, when I hear of any misfortune which hath befallen you? Surely there is one only, and with that I am accursed. It is, my Sophia, the dreadful consideration that I am myself the wretched cause. Perhaps I here do myself too much honour, but none will envy me an honour which costs me so extremely dear. Pardon me this presumption, and pardon me a greater still, if I ask you, whether my advice, my assistance, my presence, my absence, my death, or my tortures can bring you any relief? Can the most perfect admiration, the most watchful observance, the most ardent love, the most melting tenderness, the most resigned submission to your will, make you amends for what you are to sacrifice to my happiness? If they can, fly, my lovely angel, to those arms which are ever open to receive and protect you; and to which, whether you bring yourself alone, or the riches of the world with you, is, in my opinion, an alternative not worth regarding. If, on the contrary, wisdom shall predominate, and, on the most mature reflection, inform you, that the sacrifice is too great; and if there be no way left to reconcile your father, and restore the peace of your dear mind, but by abandoning me, I conjure you drive me for ever from your thoughts, exert your resolution, and let no compassion for my sufferings bear the least weight in that tender bosom. Believe me, madam, I so sincerely love you better than myself, that my great and principal end is your happiness. My first wish (why would not fortune indulge me in it?) was, and pardon me if I say, still is, to see you every moment the happiest of women; my second wish is, to hear you are so; but no misery

on earth can equal mine, while I think you owe an uneasy moment to him who is,

Madam,

in every sense, and to every purpose,

your devoted,

THOMAS JONES."

What Sophia said, or did, or thought, upon this letter, how often she read it, or whether more than once, shall all be left to our reader's imagination. The answer to it he may perhaps see hereafter, but not at present: for this reason, among others, that she did not now write any, and that for several good causes, one of which was this, she had no paper, pen, nor ink.

In the evening, while Sophia was meditating on the letter she had received, or on something else, a violent noise from below disturbed her meditations. This noise was no other than a round bout at altercation between two persons. One of the combatants, by his voice, she immediately distinguished to be her father; but she did not so soon discover the shriller pipes to belong to the organ of her aunt Western, who was just arrived in town, where having, by means of one of her servants, who stopt at the Hercules Pillars, learned where her brother lodged, she drove directly to his lodgings.

We shall therefore take our leave at present of Sophia, and, with our usual good-breeding, attend her ladyship.

Chapter iv.

In which Sophia is delivered from her confinement.

THE squire and the parson (for the landlord was now otherwise engaged) were smoaking their pipes together, when the arrival of the lady was first signified. The squire no sooner heard her name, than he immediately ran down to usher her upstairs; for he was a great observer of such ceremonials, especially to his sister, of whom he stood more in awe than of any other human creature, though he never would own this, nor did he perhaps know it himself.

Mrs Western, on her arrival in the dining-room, having flung herself into a chair, began thus to harangue: "Well, surely, no one ever had such an intolerable journey. I think the roads, since so many turnpike acts, are grown worse than ever. La, brother, how could you get into this odious place? no person of condition, I dare swear, ever set foot here before." "I don't know," cries the squire, "I think they do well enough; it was landlord recommended them. I thought, as he knew most of the quality, he could best shew me where to get among um." "Well, and where's my niece?" says the lady; "have you been to wait upon Lady Bellaston yet?" "Ay, ay," cries the squire, "your niece is safe enough; she is upstairs in chamber." "How!" answered the lady, "is my niece in this house, and does she not know of my being here?" "No, nobody can well get to her," says the squire, "for she is under lock and key. I have her safe; I vetched her from my lady cousin the first night I came to town, and I have taken care o' her ever since; she is as secure as a fox in a bag, I promise you." "Good heaven!" returned Mrs Western, "what

do I hear? I thought what a fine piece of work would be the consequence of my consent to your coming to town yourself; nay, it was indeed your own headstrong will, nor can I charge myself with having ever consented to it. Did not you promise me, brother, that you would take none of these headstrong measures? Was it not by these headstrong measures that you forced my niece to run away from you in the country? Have you a mind to oblige her to take such another step?" "Z——ds and the devil!" cries the squire, dashing his pipe on the ground; "did ever mortal hear the like? when I expected you would have commended me for all I have done, to be fallen upon in this manner!" "How, brother!" said the lady, "have I ever given you the least reason to imagine I should commend you for locking up your daughter? Have I not often told you that women in a free country are not to be treated with such arbitrary power? We are as free as the men, and I heartily wish I could not say we deserve that freedom better. If you expect I should stay a moment longer in this wretched house, or that I should ever own you again as my relation, or that I should ever trouble myself again with the affairs of your family, I insist upon it that my niece be set at liberty this instant." This she spoke with so commanding an air, standing with her back to the fire, with one hand behind her, and a pinch of snuff in the other, that I question whether Thalestris, at the head of her Amazons, ever made a more tremendous figure. It is no wonder, therefore, that the poor squire was not proof against the awe which she inspired. "There," he cried, throwing down the key, "there it is, do whatever you please. I intended only to have kept her up till Blifil came to town, which can't be long; and now if any harm happens in the mean time, remember who is to be blamed for it."

"I will answer it with my life," cried Mrs Western, "but I shall not intermeddle at all, unless upon one condition, and that is, that you will commit the whole entirely to my care, without taking any one measure yourself, unless I shall eventually appoint you to act. If you ratify these preliminaries, brother, I yet will endeavour to preserve the honour of your family; if not, I shall continue in a neutral state."

"I pray you, good sir," said the parson, "permit yourself this once to be admonished by her ladyship: peradventure, by communing with young Madam Sophia, she will effect more than you have been able to perpetrate by more rigorous measures."

"What, dost thee open upon me?" cries the squire: "if thee dost begin to babble, I shall whip thee in presently."

"Fie, brother," answered the lady, "is this language to a clergyman? Mr Supple is a man of sense, and gives you the best advice; and the whole world, I believe, will concur in his opinion; but I must tell you I expect an immediate answer to my categorical proposals. Either cede your daughter to my disposal, or take her wholly to your own surprizing discretion, and then I here, before Mr Supple, evacuate the garrison, and renounce you and your family for ever."

"I pray you let me be a mediator," cries the parson, "let me supplicate you."

"Why, there lies the key on the table," cries the squire. "She may take un up, if she pleases: who hinders her?"

"No, brother," answered the lady, "I insist on the formality of its being delivered me, with a full ratification of all the concessions stipulated."

"Why then I will deliver it to you.—There 'tis," cries the squire. "I am sure, sister, you can't accuse me of ever denying to trust my daughter to you. She

hath a-lived wi' you a whole year and muore to a time, without my ever zeeing her."

"And it would have been happy for her," answered the lady, "if she had always lived with me. Nothing of this kind would have happened under my eye."

"Ay, certainly," cries he, "I only am to blame."

"Why, you are to blame, brother," answered she. "I have been often obliged to tell you so, and shall always be obliged to tell you so. However, I hope you will now amend, and gather so much experience from past errors, as not to defeat my wisest machinations by your blunders. Indeed, brother, you are not qualified for these negociations. All your whole scheme of politics is wrong. I once more, therefore, insist, that you do not intermeddle. Remember only what is past."——

"Z——ds and bl—d, sister," cries the squire, "what would you have me say? You are enough to provoke the devil."

"There, now," said she, "just according to the old custom. I see, brother, there is no talking to you. I will appeal to Mr Supple, who is a man of sense, if I said anything which could put any human creature into a passion; but you are so wrongheaded every way."

"Let me beg you, madam," said the parson, "not to irritate his worship."

"Irritate him?" said the lady; "sure, you are as great a fool as himself. Well, brother, since you have promised not to interfere, I will once more undertake the management of my niece. Lord have mercy upon all affairs which are under the directions of men! The head of one woman is worth a thousand of yours." And now having summoned a servant to show her to Sophia, she departed, bearing the key with her.

She was no sooner gone, than the squire (having first shut the door) ejaculated twenty bitches, and as many

hearty curses against her, not sparing himself for having ever thought of her estate; but added, "Now one hath been a slave so long, it would be pity to lose it at last, for want of holding out a little longer. The bitch can't live for ever, and I know I am down for it upon the will."

The parson greatly commended this resolution: and now the squire having ordered in another bottle, which was his usual method when anything either pleased or vexed him, did, by drinking plentifully of this medicinal julap, so totally wash away his choler, that his temper was become perfectly placid and serene, when Mrs Western returned with Sophia into the room. The young lady had on her hat and capuchin, and the aunt acquainted Mr Western, "that she intended to take her niece with her to her own lodgings; for, indeed, brother," says she, "these rooms are not fit to receive a Christian soul in."

"Very well, madam," quoth Western, "whatever you please. The girl can never be in better hands than yours; and the parson here can do me the justice to say, that I have said fifty times behind your back, that you was one of the most sensible women in the world."

"To this," cries the parson, "I am ready to bear testimony."

"Nay, brother," says Mrs Western, "I have always, I'm sure, given you as favourable a character. You must own you have a little too much hastiness in your temper; but when you will allow yourself time to reflect I never knew a man more reasonable."

"Why then, sister, if you think so," said the squire, "here's your good health with all my heart. I am a little passionate sometimes, but I scorn to bear any malice. Sophy, do you be a good girl, and do everything your aunt orders you."

"I have not the least doubt of her," answered Mrs Western. "She hath had already an example before her eyes in the behaviour of that wretch her cousin Harriet, who ruined herself by neglecting my advice. O brother, what think you? You was hardly gone out of hearing, when you set out for London, when who should arrive but that impudent fellow with the odious Irish name—that Fitzpatrick. He broke in abruptly upon me without notice, or I would not have seen him. He ran on a long, unintelligible story about his wife, to which he forced me to give him a hearing; but I made him very little answer, and delivered him the letter from his wife, which I bid him answer himself. I suppose the wretch will endeavour to find us out, but I beg you will not see her, for I am determined I will not."

"I zee her!" answered the squire; "you need not fear me. I'll ge no encouragemant to such undutiful wenches. It is well for the fellow, her husband, I was not at huome. Od rabbit it, he should have taken a dance thru the horse-pond, I promise un. You zee, Sophy, what undutifulness brings volks to. You have an example in your own family."

"Brother," cries the aunt, "you need not shock my niece by such odious repetitions. Why will you not leave everything entirely to me?" "Well, well, I wull, I wull," said the squire.

And now Mrs Western, luckily for Sophia, put an end to the conversation by ordering chairs to be called. I say luckily, for had it continued much longer, fresh matter of dissension would, most probably, have arisen between the brother and sister; between whom education and sex made the only difference; for both were equally violent and equally positive: they had both a vast affection for Sophia, and both a sovereign contempt for each other.

Chapter v.

In which Jones receives a letter from Sophia, and goes to a play with Mrs Miller and Partridge.

THE arrival of Black George in town, and the good offices which that grateful fellow had promised to do for his old benefactor, greatly comforted Jones in the midst of all the anxiety and uneasiness which he had suffered on the account of Sophia; from whom, by the means of the said George, he received the following answer to his letter, which Sophia, to whom the use of pen, ink, and paper was restored with her liberty, wrote the very evening when she departed from her confinement:

"SIR,

"As I do not doubt your sincerity in what you write, you will be pleased to hear that some of my afflictions are at an end, by the arrival of my aunt Western, with whom I am at present, and with whom I enjoy all the liberty I can desire. One promise my aunt hath insisted on my making, which is, that I will not see or converse with any person without her knowledge and consent. This promise I have most solemnly given, and shall most inviolably keep: and though she hath not expressly forbidden me writing, yet that must be an omission from forgetfulness; or this, perhaps, is included in the word conversing. However, as I cannot but consider this as a breach of her generous confidence in my honour, you cannot expect that I shall, after this, continue to write myself or to receive letters, without her knowledge. A promise is with me a very sacred thing, and to be extended to everything understood from it, as well as to what is expressed by it; and this consideration may, perhaps, on reflection,

afford you some comfort. But why should I mention a comfort to you of this kind; for though there is one thing in which I can never comply with the best of fathers, yet am I firmly resolved never to act in defiance of him, or to take any step of consequence without his consent. A firm persuasion of this must teach you to divert your thoughts from what fortune hath (perhaps) made impossible. This your own interest persuades you. This may reconcile, I hope, Mr Allworthy to you; and if it will, you have my injunctions to pursue it. Accidents have laid some obligations on me, and your good intentions probably more. Fortune may, perhaps, be some time kinder to us both than at present. Believe this, that I shall always think of you as I think you deserve, and am,

Sir,
your obliged humble servant,
SOPHIA WESTERN.

"I charge you write to me no more—at present at least; and accept this, which is now of no service to me, which I know you must want, and think you owe the trifle only to that fortune by which you found it." *

A child who hath just learnt his letters would have spelt this letter out in less time than Jones took in reading it. The sensations it occasioned were a mixture of joy and grief; somewhat like what divide the mind of a good man when he peruses the will of his deceased friend, in which a large legacy, which his distresses make the more welcome, is bequeathed to him. Upon the whole, however, he was more pleased than displeased; and, indeed, the reader may probably wonder that he was displeased at all; but the reader is not quite so much in love as was poor Jones; and love

* Meaning, perhaps, the bank-bill for £100.

is a disease which, though it may, in some instances, resemble a consumption (which it sometimes causes), in others proceeds in direct opposition to it, and particularly in this, that it never flatters itself, or sees any one symptom in a favourable light.

One thing gave him complete satisfaction, which was, that his mistress had regained her liberty, and was now with a lady where she might at least assure herself of a decent treatment. Another comfortable circumstance was the reference which she made to her promise of never marrying any other man; for however disinterested he might imagine his passion, and notwithstanding all the generous overtures made in his letter, I very much question whether he could have heard a more afflicting piece of news than that Sophia was married to another, though the match had been never so great, and never so likely to end in making her completely happy. That refined degree of Platonic affection which is absolutely detached from the flesh, and is, indeed, entirely and purely spiritual, is a gift confined to the female part of the creation; many of whom I have heard declare (and, doubtless, with great truth), that they would, with the utmost readiness, resign a lover to a rival, when such resignation was proved to be necessary for the temporal interest of such lover. Hence, therefore, I conclude that this affection is in nature, though I cannot pretend to say I have ever seen an instance of it.

Mr Jones having spent three hours in reading and kissing the aforesaid letter, and being, at last, in a state of good spirits, from the last-mentioned considerations, he agreed to carry an appointment, which he had before made, into execution. This was, to attend Mrs Miller, and her younger daughter, into the gallery at the play-house, and to admit Mr Partridge as one of the company. For as Jones had really that taste for

humour which many affect, he expected to enjoy much entertainment in the criticisms of Partridge, from whom he expected the simple dictates of nature, unimproved, indeed, but likewise unadulterated, by art.

In the first row then of the first gallery did Mr Jones, Mrs Miller, her youngest daughter, and Partridge, take their places. Partridge immediately declared it was the finest place he had ever been in. When the first music was played, he said, "It was a wonder how so many fiddlers could play at one time, without putting one another out." While the fellow was lighting the upper candles, he cried out to Mrs Miller, "Look, look, madam, the very picture of the man in the end of the common-prayer book before the gunpowder-treason service." Nor could he help observing, with a sigh, when all the candles were lighted, "That here were candles enough burnt in one night, to keep an honest poor family for a whole twelvemonth."

As soon as the play, which was Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, began, Partridge was all attention, nor did he break silence till the entrance of the ghost; upon which he asked Jones, "What man that was in the strange dress; something," said he, "like what I have seen in a picture. Sure it is not armour, is it?" Jones answered, "That is the ghost." To which Partridge replied with a smile, "Persuade me to that, sir, if you can. Though I can't say I ever actually saw a ghost in my life, yet I am certain I should know one, if I saw him, better than that comes to. No, no, sir, ghosts don't appear in such dresses as that, neither." In this mistake, which caused much laughter in the neighbourhood of Partridge, he was suffered to continue, till the scene between the ghost and Hamlet, when Partridge gave that credit to Mr Garrick, which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a trembling, that his

knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage? "O la! sir," said he, "I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything; for I know it is but a play. And if it was really a ghost, it could do one no harm at such a distance, and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only person." "Why, who," cries Jones, "dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?" "Nay, you may call me coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life. Ay, ay: go along with you: Ay, to be sure! Who's fool then? Will you? Lud have mercy upon such fool-hardiness!—Whatever happens, it is good enough for you.——Follow you? I'd follow the devil as soon. Nay, perhaps it is the devil——for they say he can put on what likeness he pleases.—Oh! here he is again.——No farther! No, you have gone far enough already; farther than I'd have gone for all the king's dominions." Jones offered to speak, but Partridge cried "Hush, hush! dear sir, don't you hear him?" And during the whole speech of the ghost, he sat with his eyes fixed partly on the ghost and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open; the same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet, succeeding likewise in him.

When the scene was over Jones said, "Why, Partridge, you exceed my expectations. You enjoy the play more than I conceived possible." "Nay, sir," answered Partridge, "if you are not afraid of the devil, I can't help it; but to be sure, it is natural to be surprized at such things, though I know there is nothing in them: not that it was the ghost that surprized me, neither; for I should have known that to have been only a man in a strange dress; but when I saw the

little man so frightened himself, it was that which took hold of me." "And dost thou imagine, then, Partridge," cries Jones, "that he was really frightened?" "Nay, sir," said Partridge, "did not you yourself observe afterwards, when he found it was his own father's spirit, and how he was murdered in the garden, how his fear forsook him by degrees, and he was struck dumb with sorrow, as it were, just as I should have been, had it been my own case?—But hush! O la! what noise is that? There he is again.——Well to be certain, though I know there is nothing at all in it, I am glad I am not down yonder, where those men are." Then turning his eyes again upon Hamlet, "Ay, you may draw your sword; what signifies a sword against the power of the devil?"

During the second act, Partridge made very few remarks. He greatly admired the fineness of the dresses; nor could he help observing upon the king's countenance. "Well," said he, "how people may be deceived by faces! *Nulla fides fronti* is, I find, a true saying. Who would think, by looking in the king's face, that he had ever committed a murder?" He then enquired after the ghost; but Jones, who intended he should be surprized, gave him no other satisfaction, than, "that he might possibly see him again soon, and in a flash of fire."

Partridge sat in a fearful expectation of this; and now, when the ghost made his next appearance, Partridge cried out, "There, sir, now; what say you now? is he frightened now or no? As much frightened as you think me, and, to be sure, nobody can help some fears. I would not be in so bad a condition as what's his name, squire Hamlet, is there, for all the world. Bless me! what's become of the spirit? As I am a living soul, I thought I saw him sink into the earth." "Indeed, you saw right," answered Jones. "Well,

well," cries Partridge, "I know it is only a play: and besides, if there was anything in all this, Madam Miller would not laugh so; for as to you, sir, you would not be afraid, I believe, if the devil was here in person. —There, there—Ay, no wonder you are in such a passion, shake the vile wicked wretch to pieces. If she was my own mother, I would serve her so. To be sure all duty to a mother is forfeited by such wicked doings.——Ay, go about your business, I hate the sight of you."

Our critic was now pretty silent till the play, which Hamlet introduces before the king. This he did not at first understand, till Jones explained it to him; but he no sooner entered into the spirit of it, than he began to bless himself that he had never committed murder. Then turning to Mrs Miller, he asked her, "If she did not imagine the king looked as if he was touched; though he is," said he, "a good actor, and doth all he can to hide it. Well, I would not have so much to answer for, as that wicked man there hath, to sit upon a much higher chair than he sits upon. No wonder he run away; for your sake I'll never trust an innocent face again."

The grave-digging scene next engaged the attention of Partridge, who expressed much surprize at the number of skulls thrown upon the stage. To which Jones answered, "That it was one of the most famous burial-places about town." "No wonder then," cries Partridge, "that the place is haunted. But I never saw in my life a worse grave-digger. I had a sexton, when I was clerk, that should have dug three graves while he is digging one. The fellow handles a spade as if it was the first time he had ever had one in his hand. Ay, ay, you may sing. You had rather sing than work, I believe."—Upon Hamlet's taking up the skull, he cried out, "Well! it is strange to see how

fearless some men are: I never could bring myself to touch anything belonging to a dead man, on any account.—He seemed frightened enough too at the ghost, I thought. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*"

Little more worth remembering occurred during the play, at the end of which Jones asked him, "Which of the players he had liked best?" To this he answered, with some appearance of indignation at the question, "The king, without doubt." "Indeed, Mr Partridge," says Mrs Miller, "you are not of the same opinion with the town; for they are all agreed, that Hamlet is acted by the best player who ever was on the stage." "He the best player!" cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer, "why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure, if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you called it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me, any man, that is, any good man, that had such a mother, would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me; but indeed, madam, though I was never at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country; and the king for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other.—Anybody may see he is an actor."

While Mrs Miller was thus engaged in conversation with Partridge, a lady came up to Mr Jones, whom he immediately knew to be Mrs Fitzpatrick. She said, she had seen him from the other part of the gallery, and had taken that opportunity of speaking to him, as she had something to say, which might be of great service to himself. She then acquainted him with her lodgings, and made him an appointment the next day in the morning; which, upon recollection, she presently

changed to the afternoon; at which time Jones promised to attend her.

Thus ended the adventure at the playhouse; where Partridge had afforded great mirth, not only to Jones and Mrs Miller, but to all who sat within hearing, who were more attentive to what he said, than to anything that passed on the stage.

He durst not go to bed all that night, for fear of the ghost; and for many nights after sweated two or three hours before he went to sleep, with the same apprehensions, and waked several times in great horrors, crying out, "Lord have mercy upon us! there it is."

Chapter vi.

In which the history is obliged to look back.

IT is almost impossible for the best parent to observe an exact impartiality to his children, even though no superior merit should bias his affection; but sure a parent can hardly be blamed, when that superiority determines his preference.

As I regard all the personages of this history in the light of my children; so I must confess the same inclination of partiality to Sophia; and for that I hope the reader will allow me the same excuse, from the superiority of her character.

This extraordinary tenderness which I have for my heroine never suffers me to quit her any long time without the utmost reluctance. I could now, therefore, return impatiently to enquire what hath happened to this lovely creature since her departure from her father's, but that I am obliged first to pay a short visit to Mr Blifil.

Mr Western, in the first confusion into which his

mind was cast upon the sudden news he received of his daughter, and in the first hurry to go after her, had not once thought of sending any account of the discovery to Blifil. He had not gone far, however, before he recollected himself, and accordingly stopt at the very first inn he came to, and dispatched away a messenger to acquaint Blifil with his having found Sophia, and with his firm resolution to marry her to him immediately, if he would come up after him to town.

As the love which Blifil had for Sophia was of that violent kind, which nothing but the loss of her fortune, or some such accident, could lessen, his inclination to the match was not at all altered by her having run away, though he was obliged to lay this to his own account. He very readily, therefore, embraced this offer. Indeed, he now proposed the gratification of a very strong passion besides avarice, by marrying this young lady, and this was hatred; for he concluded that matrimony afforded an equal opportunity of satisfying either hatred or love; and this opinion is very probably verified by much experience. To say the truth, if we are to judge by the ordinary behaviour of married persons to each other, we shall perhaps be apt to conclude that the generality seek the indulgence of the former passion only, in their union of everything but of hearts.

There was one difficulty, however, in his way, and this arose from Mr Allworthy. That good man, when he found by the departure of Sophia (for neither that, nor the cause of it, could be concealed from him), the great aversion which she had for his nephew, began to be seriously concerned that he had been deceived into carrying matters so far. He by no means concurred with the opinion of those parents, who think it as immaterial to consult the inclinations of their

children in the affair of marriage, as to solicit the good pleasure of their servants when they intend to take a journey; and who are by law, or decency at least, withheld often from using absolute force. On the contrary, as he esteemed the institution to be of the most sacred kind, he thought every preparatory caution necessary to preserve it holy and inviolate; and very wisely concluded, that the surest way to effect this was by laying the foundation in previous affection.

Blifil indeed soon cured his uncle of all anger on the score of deceit, by many vows and protestations that he had been deceived himself, with which the many declarations of Western very well tallied; but now to persuade Allworthy to consent to the renewing his addresses was a matter of such apparent difficulty, that the very appearance was sufficient to have deterred a less enterprizing genius; but this young gentleman so well knew his own talents, that nothing within the province of cunning seemed to him hard to be atchieved.

Here then he represented the violence of his own affection, and the hopes of subduing aversion in the lady by perseverance. He begged that, in an affair on which depended all his future repose, he might at least be at liberty to try all fair means for success. Heaven forbid, he said, that he should ever think of prevailing by any other than the most gentle methods! "Besides, sir," said he, "if they fail, you may then (which will be surely time enough) deny your consent." He urged the great and eager desire which Mr Western had for the match; and lastly, he made great use of the name of Jones, to whom he imputed all that had happened; and from whom, he said, to preserve so valuable a young lady was even an act of charity.

All these arguments were well seconded by Thwackum, who dwelt a little stronger on the authority of parents than Mr Blifil himself had done.

He ascribed the measures which Mr Blifil was desirous to take to Christian motives; "and though," says he, "the good young gentleman hath mentioned charity last, I am almost convinced it is his first and principal consideration."

Square, possibly, had he been present, would have sung to the same tune, though in a different key, and would have discovered much moral fitness in the proceeding: but he was now gone to Bath for the recovery of his health.

Allworthy, though not without reluctance, at last yielded to the desires of his nephew. He said he would accompany him to London, where he might be at liberty to use every honest endeavour to gain the lady: "But I declare," said he, "I will never give my consent to any absolute force being put on her inclinations, nor shall you ever have her, unless she can be brought freely to compliance."

Thus did the affection of Allworthy for his nephew betray the superior understanding to be triumphed over by the inferior; and thus is the prudence of the best of heads often defeated by the tenderness of the best of hearts.

Blifil, having obtained this unhoped-for acquiescence in his uncle, rested not till he carried his purpose into execution. And as no immediate business required Mr Allworthy's presence in the country, and little preparation is necessary to men for a journey, they set out the very next day, and arrived in town that evening, when Mr Jones, as we have seen, was diverting himself with Partridge at the play.

The morning after his arrival Mr Blifil waited on Mr Western, by whom he was most kindly and graciously received, and from whom he had every possible assurance (perhaps more than was possible) that he should very shortly be as happy as Sophia could make

him; nor would the squire suffer the young gentleman to return to his uncle till he had, almost against his will, carried him to his sister.

Chapter viij.

In which Mr Western pays a visit to his sister, in company with Mr Blifil.

MRS WESTERN was reading a lecture on prudence, and matrimonial politics, to her niece, when her brother and Blifil broke in with less ceremony than the laws of visiting require. Sophia no sooner saw Blifil than she turned pale, and almost lost the use of all her faculties; but her aunt, on the contrary, waxed red, and, having all her faculties at command, began to exert her tongue on the squire.

"Brother," said she, "I am astonished at your behaviour; will you never learn any regard to decorum? Will you still look upon every apartment as your own, or as belonging to one of your country tenants? Do you think yourself at liberty to invade the privacies of women of condition, without the least decency or notice?"——"Why, what a pox is the matter now?" quoth the squire; "one would think I had caught you at—"—"None of your brutality, sir, I beseech you," answered she.——"You have surprized my poor niece so, that she can hardly, I see, support herself.——Go, my dear, retire, and endeavour to recruit your spirits; for I see you have occasion." At which words Sophia, who never received a more welcome command, hastily withdrew.

"To be sure, sister," cries the squire, "you are mad, when I have brought Mr Blifil here to court her, to force her away."

"Sure, brother," says she, "you are worse than mad, when you know in what situation affairs are, to——I am sure I ask Mr Blifil's pardon, but he knows very well to whom to impute so disagreeable a reception. For my own part, I am sure I shall always be very glad to see Mr Blifil; but his own good sense would not have suffered him to proceed so abruptly, had you not compelled him to it."

Blifil bowed and stammered, and looked like a fool; but Western, without giving him time to form a speech for the purpose, answered, "Well, well, I am to blame, if you will, I always am, certainly; but come, let the girl be fetched back again, or let Mr Blifil go to her. ——He's come up on purpose, and there is no time to be lost."

"Brother," cries Mrs Western, "Mr Blifil, I am confident, understands himself better than to think of seeing my niece any more this morning, after what hath happened. Women are of a nice contexture; and our spirits, when disordered, are not to be recomposed in a moment. Had you suffered Mr Blifil to have sent his compliments to my niece, and to have desired the favour of waiting on her in the afternoon, I should possibly have prevailed on her to have seen him; but now I despair of bringing about any such matter."

"I am very sorry, madam," cried Blifil, "that Mr Western's extraordinary kindness to me, which I can never enough acknowledge, should have occasioned—" "Indeed, sir," said she, interrupting him, "you need make no apologies, we all know my brother so well."

"I don't care what anybody knows of me," answered the squire;——"but when must he come to see her? for, consider, I tell you, he is come up on purpose, and so is Allworthy."—"Brother," said she, "whatever message Mr Blifil thinks proper to send to my niece

shall be delivered to her; and I suppose she will want no instructions to make a proper answer. I am convinced she will not refuse to see Mr Blifil at a proper time." —"The devil she won't!" answered the squire.—"Odsbud!—Don't we know—I say nothing, but some volk are wiser than all the world.——If I might have had my will, she had not run away before: and now I expect to hear every moment she is guone again. For as great a fool as some volk think me, I know very well she hates——" "No matter, brother," replied Mrs Western, "I will not hear my niece abused. It is a reflection on my family. She is an honour to it; and she will be an honour to it, I promise you. I will pawn my whole reputation in the world on her conduct.——I shall be glad to see you, brother, in the afternoon; for I have somewhat of importance to mention to you.—At present, Mr Blifil, as well as you, must excuse me; for I am in haste to dress." "Well, but," said the squire, "do appoint a time." "Indeed," said she, "I can appoint no time. I tell you I will see you in the afternoon."—"What the devil would you have me do?" cries the squire, turning to Blifil; "I can no more turn her, than a beagle can turn an old hare. Perhaps she will be in a better humour in the afternoon."—"I am condemned, I see, sir, to misfortune," answered Blifil; "but I shall always own my obligations to you." He then took a ceremonious leave of Mrs Western, who was altogether as ceremonious on her part; and then they departed, the squire muttering to himself with an oath, that Blifil should see his daughter in the afternoon.

If Mr Western was little pleased with this interview, Blifil was less. As to the former, he imputed the whole behaviour of his sister to her humour only, and to her dissatisfaction at the omission of ceremony in the visit; but Blifil saw a little deeper into things.

He suspected somewhat of more consequence, from two or three words which dropt from the lady; and, to say the truth, he suspected right, as will appear when I have unfolded the several matters which will be contained in the following chapter.

Chapter viij.

Schemes of Lady Bellaston for the ruin of Jones.

LOVE had taken too deep a root in the mind of Lord Fellamar to be plucked up by the rude hands of Mr Western. In the heat of resentment he had, indeed, given a commission to Captain Egglane, which the captain had far exceeded in the execution; nor had it been executed at all, had his lordship been able to find the captain after he had seen Lady Bellaston, which was in the afternoon of the day after he had received the affront; but so industrious was the captain in the discharge of his duty, that, having after long enquiry found out the squire's lodgings very late in the evening, he sat up all night at a tavern, that he might not miss the squire in the morning, and by that means missed the revocation which my lord had sent to his lodgings.

In the afternoon then next after the intended rape of Sophia, his lordship, as we have said, made a visit to Lady Bellaston, who laid open so much of the character of the squire, that his lordship plainly saw the absurdity he had been guilty of in taking any offence at his words, especially as he had those honourable designs on his daughter. He then unbosomed the violence of his passion to Lady Bellaston, who readily undertook the cause, and encouraged him with certain

assurance of a most favourable reception from all the elders of the family, and from the father himself when he should be sober, and should be made acquainted with the nature of the offer made to his daughter. The only danger, she said, lay in the fellow she had formerly mentioned, who, though a beggar and a vagabond, had, by some means or other, she knew not what, procured himself tolerable cloaths, and past for a gentleman. "Now," says she, "as I have, for the sake of my cousin, made it my business to enquire after this fellow, I have luckily found out his lodgings;" with which she then acquainted his lordship. "I am thinking, my lord," added she "(for this fellow is too mean for your personal resentment), whether it would not be possible for your lordship to contrive some method of having him pressed and sent on board a ship. Neither law nor conscience forbid this project: for the fellow, I promise you, however well drest, is but a vagabond, and as proper as any fellow in the streets to be pressed into the service; and as for the conscientious part, surely the preservation of a young lady from such ruin is a most meritorious act; nay, with regard to the fellow himself, unless he could succeed (which Heaven forbid) with my cousin, it may probably be the means of preserving him from the gallows, and perhaps may make his fortune in an honest way."

Lord Fellamar very heartily thanked her ladyship for the part which she was pleased to take in the affair, upon the success of which his whole future happiness entirely depended. He said, he saw at present no objection to the pressing scheme, and would consider of putting it in execution. He then most earnestly recommended to her ladyship to do him the honour of immediately mentioning his proposals to the family; to whom he said he offered a *carte blanche*,

and would settle his fortune in almost any manner they should require. And after uttering many ecstasies and raptures concerning Sophia, he took his leave and departed, but not before he had received the strongest charge to beware of Jones, and to lose no time in securing his person, where he should no longer be in a capacity of making any attempts to the ruin of the young lady.

The moment Mrs Western was arrived at her lodgings, a card was despatched with her compliments to Lady Bellaston; who no sooner received it than, with the impatience of a lover, she flew to her cousin, rejoiced at this fair opportunity, which beyond her hopes offered itself, for she was much better pleased with the prospect of making the proposals to a woman of sense, and who knew the world, than to a gentleman whom she honoured with the appellation of Hottentot; though, indeed, from him she apprehended no danger of a refusal.

The two ladies being met, after very short previous ceremonials, fell to business, which was indeed almost as soon concluded as begun; for Mrs Western no sooner heard the name of Lord Fellamar than her cheeks glowed with pleasure; but when she was acquainted with the eagerness of his passion, the earnestness of his proposals, and the generosity of his offer, she declared her full satisfaction in the most explicit terms.

In the progress of their conversation their discourse turned to Jones, and both cousins very pathetically lamented the unfortunate attachment which both agreed Sophia had to that young fellow; and Mrs Western entirely attributed it to the folly of her brother's management. She concluded, however, at last, with declaring her confidence in the good understanding of her niece, who, though she would not give up her

affection in favour of Blifil, will, I doubt not, says she, soon be prevailed upon to sacrifice a simple inclination to the addresses of a fine gentleman, who brings her both a title and a large estate: "For, indeed," added she, "I must do Sophy the justice to confess this Blifil is but a hideous kind of fellow, as you know, Bellaston, all country gentlemen are, and hath nothing but his fortune to recommend him."

"Nay," said Lady Bellaston, "I don't then so much wonder at my cousin; for I promise you this Jones is a very agreeable fellow, and hath one virtue, which the men say is a great recommendation to us. What do you think, Mrs Western—I shall certainly make you laugh; nay, I can hardly tell you myself for laughing—will you believe that the fellow hath had the assurance to make love to me? But if you should be inclined to disbelieve it, here is evidence enough, his own handwriting, I assure you." She then delivered her cousin the letter with the proposals of marriage, which, if the reader hath a desire to see, he will find already on record in the XVth book of this history.

"Upon my word I am astonished," said Mrs Western; "this is, indeed, a masterpiece of assurance. With your leave I may possibly make some use of this letter." "You have my full liberty," cries Lady Bellaston, "to apply it to what purpose you please. However, I would not have it shewn to any but Miss Western, nor to her unless you find occasion." "Well, and how did you use the fellow?" returned Mrs Western. "Not as a husband," said the lady; "I am not married, I promise you, my dear. You know, Bell, I have tried the comforts once already; and once, I think, is enough for any reasonable woman."

This letter Lady Bellaston thought would certainly turn the balance against Jones in the mind of Sophia,

and she was emboldened to give it up, partly by her hopes of having him instantly dispatched out of the way, and partly by having secured the evidence of Honour, who, upon sounding her, she saw sufficient reason to imagine was prepared to testify whatever she pleased.

But perhaps the reader may wonder why Lady Bellaston, who in her heart hated Sophia, should be so desirous of promoting a match which was so much to the interest of the young lady. Now, I would desire such readers to look carefully into human nature, page almost the last, and there he will find, in scarce legible characters, that women, notwithstanding the preposterous behaviour of mothers, aunts, &c., in matrimonial matters, do in reality think it so great a misfortune to have their inclinations in love thwarted, that they imagine they ought never to carry enmity higher than upon these disappointments; again, he will find it written much about the same place, that a woman who hath once been pleased with the possession of a man, will go above halfway to the devil, to prevent any other woman from enjoying the same.

If he will not be contented with these reasons, I freely confess I see no other motive to the actions of that lady, unless we will conceive she was bribed by Lord Fellamar, which for my own part I see no cause to suspect.

Now this was the affair which Mrs Western was preparing to introduce to Sophia, by some prefatory discourse on the folly of love, and on the wisdom of legal prostitution for hire, when her brother and Blifil broke abruptly in upon her; and hence arose all that coldness in her behaviour to Blifil, which, though the squire, as was usual with him, imputed to a wrong cause, infused into Blifil himself (he being a much more cunning man) a suspicion of the real truth.

Chapter ix.

In which Jones pays a visit to Mrs Fitzpatrick.

THE reader may now, perhaps, be pleased to return with us to Mr Jones, who, at the appointed hour, attended on Mrs Fitzpatrick; but before we relate the conversation which now past it may be proper, according to our method, to return a little back, and to account for so great an alteration of behaviour in this lady, that from changing her lodging principally to avoid Mr Jones, she had now industriously, as hath been seen, sought this interview.

And here we shall need only to resort to what happened the preceding day, when, hearing from Lady Bellaston that Mr Western was arrived in town, she went to pay her duty to him, at his lodgings at Piccadilly, where she was received with many scurvy compellations too coarse to be repeated, and was even threatened to be kicked out of doors. From hence, an old servant of her aunt Western, with whom she was well acquainted, conducted her to the lodgings of that lady, who treated her not more kindly, but more politely; or, to say the truth, with rudeness in another way. In short, she returned from both, plainly convinced, not only that her scheme of reconciliation had proved abortive, but that she must for ever give over all thoughts of bringing it about by any means whatever. From this moment desire of revenge only filled her mind; and in this temper meeting Jones at the play, an opportunity seemed to her to occur of effecting this purpose.

The reader must remember that he was acquainted by Mrs Fitzpatrick, in the account she gave of her own story, with the fondness Mrs Western had formerly shewn for Mr Fitzpatrick at Bath, from the disappoint-

ment of which Mrs Fitzpatrick derived the great bitterness her aunt had expressed toward her. She had, therefore, no doubt but that the good lady would as easily listen to the addresses of Mr Jones as she had before done to the other; for the superiority of charms was clearly on the side of Mr Jones; and the advance which her aunt had since made in age, she concluded (how justly I will not say), was an argument rather in favour of her project than against it.

Therefore, when Jones attended, after a previous declaration of her desire of serving him, arising, as she said, from a firm assurance how much she should by so doing oblige Sophia; and after some excuses for her former disappointment, and after acquainting Mr Jones in whose custody his mistress was, of which she thought him ignorant; she very explicitly mentioned her scheme to him, and advised him to make sham addresses to the older lady, in order to procure an easy access to the younger, informing him at the same time of the success which Mr Fitzpatrick had formerly owed to the very same stratagem.

Mr Jones expressed great gratitude to the lady for the kind intentions towards him which she had expressed, and indeed testified, by this proposal; but, besides intimating some diffidence of success from the lady's knowledge of his love to her niece, which had not been her case in regard to Mr Fitzpatrick, he said, he was afraid Miss Western would never agree to an imposition of this kind, as well from her utter detestation of all fallacy as from her avowed duty to her aunt.

Mrs Fitzpatrick was a little nettled at this; and indeed, if it may not be called a lapse of the tongue, it was a small deviation from politeness in Jones, and into which he scarce would have fallen, had not the delight he felt in praising Sophia hurried him out of all reflec-

tion; for this commendation of one cousin was more than a tacit rebuke on the other.

"Indeed, sir," answered the lady, with some warmth, "I cannot think there is anything easier than to cheat an old woman with a profession of love, when her complexion is amorous; and, though she is my aunt, I must say there never was a more liquorish one than her ladyship. Can't you pretend that the despair of possessing her niece, from her being promised to Blifil, has made you turn your thoughts towards her? As to my cousin Sophia, I can't imagine her to be such a simpleton as to have the least scruple on such an account, or to conceive any harm in punishing one of these haggs for the many mischiefs they bring upon families by their tragi-comic passions; for which I think it is a pity they are not punishable by law. I had no such scruple myself; and yet I hope my cousin Sophia will not think it an affront when I say she cannot detest every real species of falsehood more than her cousin Fitzpatrick. To my aunt, indeed, I pretend no duty, nor doth she deserve any. However, sir, I have given you my advice; and if you decline pursuing it, I shall have the less opinion of your understanding —that's all."

Jones now clearly saw the error he had committed, and exerted his utmost power to rectify it; but he only faultered and stuttered into nonsense and contradiction. To say the truth, it is often safer to abide by the consequences of the first blunder than to endeavour to rectify it; for by such endeavours we generally plunge deeper instead of extricating ourselves; and few persons will on such occasions have the good-nature which Mrs Fitzpatrick displayed to Jones, by saying, with a smile, "You need attempt no more excuses; for I can easily forgive a real lover, whatever is the effect of fondness for his mistress."

She then renewed her proposal, and very fervently recommended it, omitting no argument which her invention could suggest on the subject; for she was so violently incensed against her aunt, that scarce anything was capable of affording her equal pleasure with exposing her; and, like a true woman, she would see no difficulties in the execution of a favourite scheme.

Jones, however, persisted in declining the undertaking, which had not, indeed, the least probability of success. He easily perceived the motives which induced Mrs Fitzpatrick to be so eager in pressing her advice. He said he would not deny the tender and passionate regard he had for Sophia; but was so conscious of the inequality of their situations, that he could never flatter himself so far as to hope that so divine a young lady would condescend to think on so unworthy a man; nay, he protested, he could scarce bring himself to wish she should. He concluded with a profession of generous sentiments, which we have not at present leisure to insert.

There are some fine women (for I dare not here speak in too general terms) with whom self is so predominant, that they never detach it from any subject; and, as vanity is with them a ruling principle, they are apt to lay hold of whatever praise they meet with; and, though the property of others, convey it to their own use. In the company of these ladies it is impossible to say anything handsome of another woman which they will not apply to themselves; nay, they often improve the praise they seize; as, for instance, if her beauty, her wit, her gentility, her good humour deserve so much commendation, what do I deserve, who possess those qualities in so much more eminent a degree?

To these ladies a man often recommends himself while he is commending another woman; and, while

he is expressing ardour and generous sentiments for his mistress, they are considering what a charming lover this man would make to them, who can feel all this tenderness for an inferior degree of merit. Of this, strange as it may seem, I have seen many instances besides Mrs Fitzpatrick, to whom all this really happened, and who now began to feel a somewhat for Mr Jones, the symptoms of which she much sooner understood than poor Sophia had formerly done.

To say the truth, perfect beauty in both sexes is a more irresistible object than it is generally thought; for, notwithstanding some of us are contented with more homely lots, and learn by rote (as children to repeat what gives them no idea) to despise outside, and to value more solid charms; yet I have always observed, at the approach of consummate beauty, that these more solid charms only shine with that kind of lustre which the stars have after the rising of the sun.

When Jones had finished his exclamations, many of which would have become the mouth of Oroöndates himself, Mrs Fitzpatrick heaved a deep sigh, and, taking her eyes off from Jones, on whom they had been some time fixed, and dropping them on the ground, she cried, "Indeed, Mr Jones, I pity you; but it is the curse of such tenderness to be thrown away on those who are insensible of it. I know my cousin better than you, Mr Jones, and I must say, any woman who makes no return to such a passion, and such a person, is unworthy of both."

"Sure, madam," said Jones, "you can't mean——" "Mean!" cries Mrs Fitzpatrick, "I know not what I mean; there is something, I think, in true tenderness bewitching; few women ever meet with it in men, and fewer still know how to value it when they do. I never heard such truly noble sentiments, and I can't

tell how it is, but you force one to believe you. Sure she must be the most contemptible of women who can overlook such merit."

The manner and look with which all this was spoke infused a suspicion into Jones which we don't care to convey in direct words to the reader. Instead of making any answer, he said, "I am afraid, madam, I have made too tiresome a visit;" and offered to take his leave.

"Not at all, sir," answered Mrs Fitzpatrick.——"Indeed I pity you, Mr Jones; indeed I do: but if you are going, consider of the scheme I have mentioned—I am convinced you will approve it—and let me see you again as soon as you can.—To-morrow morning if you will, or at least some time to-morrow. I shall be at home all day."

Jones, then, after many expressions of thanks, very respectfully retired; nor could Mrs Fitzpatrick forbear making him a present of a look at parting, by which if he had understood nothing, he must have had no understanding in the language of the eyes. In reality, it confirmed his resolution of returning to her no more; for, faulty as he hath hitherto appeared in this history, his whole thoughts were now so confined to his Sophia, that I believe no woman upon earth could have now drawn him into an act of inconstancy.

Fortune, however, who was not his friend, resolved, as he intended to give her no second opportunity, to make the best of this; and accordingly produced the tragical incident which we are now in sorrowful notes to record.

Chapter 5.

The consequence of the preceding visit.

MR Fitzpatrick having received the letter before mentioned from Mrs Western, and being by that means acquainted with the place to which his wife was retired, returned directly to Bath, and thence the day after set forward to London.

The reader hath been already often informed of the jealous temper of this gentleman. He may likewise be pleased to remember the suspicion which he had conceived of Jones at Upton, upon his finding him in the room with Mrs Waters; and, though sufficient reasons had afterwards appeared entirely to clear up that suspicion, yet now the reading so handsome a character of Mr Jones from his wife, caused him to reflect that she likewise was in the inn at the same time, and jumbled together such a confusion of circumstances in a head which was naturally none of the clearest, that the whole produced that green-eyed monster mentioned by Shakespear in his tragedy of Othello.

And now, as he was enquiring in the street after his wife, and had just received directions to the door, unfortunately Mr Jones was issuing from it.

Fitzpatrick did not yet recollect the face of Jones; however, seeing a young well-dressed fellow coming from his wife, he made directly up to him, and asked him what he had been doing in that house? "for I am sure," said he, "you must have been in it, as I saw you come out of it."

Jones answered very modestly, "That he had been visiting a lady there." To which Fitzpatrick replied, "What business have you with the lady?" Upon which Jones, who now perfectly remembered the voice, features, and indeed coat, of the gentleman, cried out

——"Ha, my good friend! give me your hand; I hope there is no ill blood remaining between us, upon a small mistake which happened so long ago."

"Upon my soul, sir," said Fitzpatrick, "I don't know your name nor your face." "Indeed, sir," said Jones, "neither have I the pleasure of knowing your name, but your face I very well remember to have seen before at Upton, where a foolish quarrel happened between us, which, if it is not made up yet, we will now make up over a bottle."

"At Upton!" cried the other;——"Ha! upon my soul, I believe your name is Jones?" "Indeed," answered he, "it is."—"O! upon my soul," cries Fitzpatrick, "you are the very man I wanted to meet. —Upon my soul I will drink a bottle with you presently; but first I will give you a great knock over the pate. There is for you, you rascal. Upon my soul, if you do not give me satisfaction for that blow, I will give you another." And then, drawing his sword, put himself in a posture of defence, which was the only science he understood.

Jones was a little staggered by the blow, which came somewhat unexpectedly; but presently recovering himself he also drew, and though he understood nothing of fencing, prest on so boldly upon Fitzpatrick, that he beat down his guard, and sheathed one half of his sword in the body of the said gentleman, who had no sooner received it than he stept backwards, dropped the point of his sword, and leaning upon it, cried, "I have satisfaction enough: I am a dead man."

"I hope not," cries Jones, "but whatever be the consequence, you must be sensible you have drawn it upon yourself." At this instant a number of fellows rushed in and seized Jones, who told them he should make no resistance, and begged some of them at least would take care of the wounded gentleman.

Walter L. Colls Pk. sc.

A number of fellows rushed in & seized Jones.

"Ay," cries one of the fellows, "the wounded gentleman will be taken care enough of; for I suppose he hath not many hours to live. As for you, sir, you have a month at least good yet." "D—n me, Jack," said another, "he hath prevented his voyage; he's bound to another port now;" and many other such jests was our poor Jones made the subject of by these fellows, who were indeed the gang employed by Lord Fellamar, and had dogged him into the house of Mrs Fitzpatrick, waiting for him at the corner of the street when this unfortunate accident happened.

The officer who commanded this gang very wisely concluded that his business was now to deliver his prisoner into the hands of the civil magistrate. He ordered him, therefore, to be carried to a public-house, where, having sent for a constable, he delivered him to his custody.

The constable, seeing Mr Jones very well drest, and hearing that the accident had happened in a duel, treated his prisoner with great civility, and at his request dispatched a messenger to enquire after the wounded gentleman, who was now at a tavern under the surgeon's hands. The report brought back was, that the wound was certainly mortal, and there were no hopes of life. Upon which the constable informed Jones that he must go before a justice. He answered, "Wherever you please; I am indifferent as to what happens to me; for though I am convinced I am not guilty of murder in the eye of the law, yet the weight of blood I find intolerable upon my mind."

Jones was now conducted before the justice, where the surgeon who dressed Mr Fitzpatrick appeared, and deposed that he believed the wound to be mortal; upon which the prisoner was committed to the Gatehouse. It was very late at night, so that Jones would not send for Partridge till the next morning; and, as he never

shut his eyes till seven, so it was near twelve before the poor fellow, who was greatly frightened at not hearing from his master so long, received a message which almost deprived him of his being when he heard it.

He went to the Gatehouse with trembling knees and a beating heart, and was no sooner arrived in the presence of Jones than he lamented the misfortune that had befallen him with many tears, looking all the while frequently about him in great terror; for as the news now arrived that Mr Fitzpatrick was dead, the poor fellow apprehended every minute that his ghost would enter the room. At last he delivered him a letter, which he had like to have forgot, and which came from Sophia by the hands of Black George.

Jones presently dispatched every one out of the room, and, having eagerly broke open the letter, read as follows:—

"You owe the hearing from me again to an accident which I own surprizes me. My aunt hath just now shown me a letter from you to Lady Bellaston, which contains a proposal of marriage. I am convinced it is your own hand; and what more surprizes me is, that it is dated at the very time when you would have me imagine you was under such concern on my account.—I leave you to comment on this fact. All I desire is, that your name may never more be mentioned to

"S. W."

Of the present situation of Mr Jones's mind, and of the pangs with which he was now tormented, we cannot give the reader a better idea than by saying, his misery was such that even Thwackum would almost have pitied him. But, bad as it is, we shall at present leave him in it, as his good genius (if he really had any) seems to have done. And here we put an end to the sixteenth book of our history.

BOOK XVII.

CONTAINING THREE DAYS.

Chapter i.

Containing a portion of introductory writing.

WHEN a comic writer hath made his principal characters as happy as he can, or when a tragic writer hath brought them to the highest pitch of human misery, they both conclude their business to be done, and that their work is come to a period.

Had we been of the tragic complexion, the reader must now allow we were very nearly arrived at this period, since it would be difficult for the devil, or any of his representatives on earth, to have contrived much greater torments for poor Jones than those in which we left him in the last chapter; and as for Sophia, a good-natured woman would hardly wish more uneasiness to a rival than what she must at present be supposed to feel. What then remains to complete the tragedy but a murder or two and a few moral sentences!

But to bring our favourites out of their present anguish and distress, and to land them at last on the shore of happiness, seems a much harder task;

a task indeed so hard that we do not undertake to execute it. In regard to Sophia, it is more than probable that we shall somewhere or other provide a good husband for her in the end—either Blifil, or my lord, or somebody else; but as to poor Jones, such are the calamities in which he is at present involved, owing to his imprudence, by which if a man doth not become felon to the word, he is at least a *felo de se;* so destitute is he now of friends, and so persecuted by enemies, that we almost despair of bringing him to any good; and if our reader delights in seeing executions, I think he ought not to lose any time in taking a first row at Tyburn.

This I faithfully promise, that, notwithstanding any affection which we may be supposed to have for this rogue, whom we have unfortunately made our heroe, we will lend him none of that supernatural assistance with which we are entrusted, upon condition that we use it only on very important occasions. If he doth not therefore find some natural means of fairly extricating himself from all his distresses, we will do no violence to the truth and dignity of history for his sake; for we had rather relate that he was hanged at Tyburn (which may very probably be the case) than forfeit our integrity, or shock the faith of our reader.

In this the antients had a great advantage over the moderns. Their mythology, which was at that time more firmly believed by the vulgar than any religion is at present, gave them always an opportunity of delivering a favourite heroe. Their deities were always ready at the writer's elbow, to execute any of his purposes; and the more extraordinary the invention was, the greater was the surprize and delight of the credulous reader. Those writers could with greater ease have conveyed a heroe from one country to another, nay from one world to another, and have brought him back

again, than a poor circumscribed modern can deliver him from a jail.

The Arabians and Persians had an equal advantage in writing their tales from the genii and fairies, which they believe in as an article of their faith, upon the authority of the Koran itself. But we have none of these helps. To natural means alone we are confined; let us try therefore what, by these means, may be done for poor Jones; though to confess the truth, something whispers me in the ear that he doth not yet know the worst of his fortune; and that a more shocking piece of news than any he hath yet heard remains for him in the unopened leaves of fate.

Chapter ii.

The generous and grateful behaviour of Mrs Miller.

MR ALLWORTHY and Mrs Miller were just sat down to breakfast, when Blifil, who had gone out very early that morning, returned to make one of the company.

He had not been long seated before he began as follows: "Good Lord! my dear uncle, what do you think hath happened? I vow I am afraid of telling it you, for fear of shocking you with the remembrance of ever having shewn any kindness to such a villain." "What is the matter, child?" said the uncle. "I fear I have shewn kindness in my life to the unworthy more than once. But charity doth not adopt the vices of its objects." "O, sir!" returned Blifil, "it is not without the secret direction of Providence that you mention the word adoption. Your adopted son, sir, that Jones, that wretch whom you nourished in your

bosom, hath proved one of the greatest villains upon earth." "By all that's sacred 'tis false," cries Mrs Miller. "Mr Jones is no villain. He is one of the worthiest creatures breathing; and if any other person had called him villain, I would have thrown all this boiling water in his face." Mr Allworthy looked very much amazed at this behaviour. But she did not give him leave to speak, before, turning to him, she cried, "I hope you will not be angry with me; I would not offend you, sir, for the world; but, indeed, I could not bear to hear him called so." "I must own, madam," said Allworthy, very gravely, "I am a little surprized to hear you so warmly defend a fellow you do not know." "O! I do know him, Mr Allworthy," said she, "indeed I do; I should be the most ungrateful of all wretches if I denied it. O! he hath preserved me and my little family; we have all reason to bless him while we live.—And I pray Heaven to bless him, and turn the hearts of his malicious enemies. I know, I find, I see, he hath such." "You surprize me, madam, still more," said Allworthy; "sure you must mean some other. It is impossible you should have any such obligations to the man my nephew mentions." "Too surely," answered she, "I have obligations to him of the greatest and tenderest kind. He hath been the preserver of me and mine. Believe me, sir, he hath been abused, grossly abused to you; I know he hath, or you, whom I know to be all goodness and honour, would not, after the many kind and tender things I have heard you say of this poor helpless child, have so disdainfully called him fellow.—Indeed, my best of friends, he deserves a kinder appellation from you, had you heard the good, the kind, the grateful things which I have heard him utter of you. He never mentions your name but with a sort of adoration. In this very room I have seen him on his knees, imploring all the

blessings of heaven upon your head. I do not love that child there better than he loves you."

"I see, sir, now," said Blifil, with one of those grinning sneers with which the devil marks his best beloved, "Mrs Miller really doth know him. I suppose you will find she is not the only one of your acquaintance to whom he hath exposed you. As for my character, I perceive, by some hints she hath thrown out, he hath been very free with it, but I forgive him." "And the Lord forgive you, sir!" said Mrs Miller; "we have all sins enough to stand in need of his forgiveness."

"Upon my word, Mrs Miller," said Allworthy, "I do not take this behaviour of yours to my nephew kindly; and I do assure you, as any reflections which you cast upon him must come only from that wickedest of men, they would only serve, if that were possible, to heighten my resentment against him: for I must tell you, Mrs Miller, the young man who now stands before you hath ever been the warmest advocate for the ungrateful wretch whose cause you espouse. This, I think, when you hear it from my own mouth, will make you wonder at so much baseness and ingratitude."

"You are deceived, sir," answered Mrs Miller; "if they were the last words which were to issue from my lips, I would say you were deceived; and I once more repeat it, the Lord forgive those who have deceived you! I do not pretend to say the young man is without faults; but they are all the faults of wildness and of youth; faults which he may, nay, which I am certain he will, relinquish, and, if he should not, they are vastly overbalanced by one of the most humane, tender, honest hearts that ever man was blest with."

"Indeed, Mrs Miller," said Allworthy, "had this

been related of you, I should not have believed it." "Indeed, sir," answered she, "you will believe everything I have said, I am sure you will: and when you have heard the story which I shall tell you (for I will tell you all), you will be so far from being offended, that you will own (I know your justice so well), that I must have been the most despicable and most ungrateful of wretches if I had acted any other part than I have."

"Well, madam," said Allworthy, "I shall be very glad to hear any good excuse for a behaviour which, I must confess, I think wants an excuse. And now, madam, will you be pleased to let my nephew proceed in his story without interruption. He would not have introduced a matter of slight consequence with such a preface. Perhaps even this story will cure you of your mistake."

Mrs Miller gave tokens of submission, and then Mr Blifil began thus: "I am sure, sir, if you don't think proper to resent the ill-usage of Mrs Miller, I shall easily forgive what affects me only. I think your goodness hath not deserved this indignity at her hands." "Well, child," said Allworthy, "but what is this new instance? What hath he done of late?" "What," cries Blifil, "notwithstanding all Mrs Miller hath said, I am very sorry to relate, and what you should never have heard from me, had it not been a matter impossible to conceal from the whole world. In short he hath killed a man; I will not say murdered —for perhaps it may not be so construed in law, and I hope the best for his sake."

Allworthy looked shocked, and blessed himself; and then, turning to Mrs Miller, he cried, "Well, madam, what say you now?"

"Why, I say, sir," answered she, "that I never was more concerned at anything in my life; but, if the

fact be true, I am convinced the man, whoever he is, was in fault. Heaven knows there are many villains in this town who make it their business to provoke young gentlemen. Nothing but the greatest provocation could have tempted him; for of all the gentlemen I ever had in my house, I never saw one so gentle or so sweet-tempered. He was beloved by every one in the house, and every one who came near it."

While she was thus running on, a violent knocking at the door interrupted their conversation, and prevented her from proceeding further, or from receiving any answer; for, as she concluded this was a visitor to Mr Allworthy, she hastily retired, taking with her her little girl, whose eyes were all over blubbered at the melancholy news she heard of Jones, who used to call her his little wife, and not only gave her many playthings, but spent whole hours in playing with her himself.

Some readers may, perhaps, be pleased with these minute circumstances, in relating of which we follow the example of Plutarch, one of the best of our brother historians; and others, to whom they may appear trivial, will, we hope, at least pardon them, as we are never prolix on such occasions.

Chapter iii.

The arrival of Mr Western, with some matters concerning the paternal authority.

MRS MILLER had not long left the room when Mr Western entered; but not before a small wrangling bout had passed between him and his chairmen; for the fellows, who had taken up their burden at the Hercules Pillars, had conceived no hopes

of having any future good customer in the squire; and they were moreover farther encouraged by his generosity (for he had given them of his own accord sixpence more than their fare); they therefore very boldly demanded another shilling, which so provoked the squire, that he not only bestowed many hearty curses on them at the door, but retained his anger after he came into the room; swearing that all the Londoners were like the court, and thought of nothing but plundering country gentlemen. "D—n me," says he, "if I won't walk in the rain rather than get into one of their hand-barrows again. They have jolted me more in a mile than Brown Bess would in a long fox-chase."

When his wrath on this occasion was a little appeased, he resumed the same passionate tone on another. "There," says he, "there is fine business forwards now. The hounds have changed at last; and when we imagined we had a fox to deal with, od-rat it, it turns out to be a badger at last!"

"Pray, my good neighbour," said Allworthy, "drop your metaphors, and speak a little plainer." "Why, then," says the squire, "to tell you plainly, we have been all this time afraid of a son of a whore of a bastard of somebody's, I don't know whose, not I. And now here's a confounded son of a whore of a lord, who may be a bastard too for what I know or care, for he shall never have a daughter of mine by my consent. They have beggared the nation, but they shall never beggar me. My land shall never be sent over to Hanover."

"You surprize me much, my good friend," said Allworthy. "Why, zounds! I am surprized myself," answered the squire. "I went to zee sister Western last night, according to her own appointment, and there I was had into a whole room full of women. There was my lady cousin Bellaston, and my Lady Betty, and my Lady Catherine, and my lady I don't

know who; d—n me, if ever you catch me among such a kennel of hoop-petticoat b—s! D—n me, I'd rather be run by my own dogs, as one Acton was, that the story-book says was turned into a hare, and his own dogs killed un and eat un. Od-rabbit it, no mortal was ever run in such a manner; if I dodged one way, one had me; if I offered to clap back, another snapped me. 'O! certainly one of the greatest matches in England,' says one cousin (here he attempted to mimic them); 'A very advantageous offer indeed,' cries another cousin (for you must know they be all my cousins, thof I never zeed half o' um before). 'Surely,' says that fat a—se b—, my Lady Bellaston, 'cousin, you must be out of your wits to think of refusing such an offer.'"

"Now I begin to understand," says Allworthy; "some person hath made proposals to Miss Western, which the ladies of the family approve, but is not to your liking."

"My liking!" said Western, "how the devil should it? I tell you it is a lord, and those are always volks whom you know I always resolved to have nothing to do with. Did unt I refuse a matter of vorty years' purchase now for a bit of land, which one o' um had a mind to put into a park, only because I would have no dealings with lords, and dost think I would marry my daughter zu? Besides, ben't I engaged to you, and did I ever go off any bargain when I had promised?"

"As to that point, neighbour," said Allworthy, "I entirely release you from any engagement. No contract can be binding between parties who have not a full power to make it at the time, nor ever afterwards acquire the power of fulfilling it."

"Slud! then," answered Western, "I tell you I have power, and I will fulfil it. Come along with me

directly to Doctors' Commons, I will get a licence; and I will go to sister and take away the wench by force, and she shall ha un, or I will lock her up, and keep her upon bread and water as long as she lives."

"Mr Western," said Allworthy, "shall I beg you will hear my full sentiments on this matter?"—"Hear thee; ay, to be sure I will," answered he. "Why, then, sir," cries Allworthy, "I can truly say, without a compliment either to you or the young lady, that when this match was proposed, I embraced it very readily and heartily, from my regard to you both. An alliance between two families so nearly neighbours, and between whom there had always existed so mutual an intercourse and good harmony, I thought a most desirable event; and with regard to the young lady, not only the concurrent opinion of all who knew her, but my own observation assured me that she would be an inestimable treasure to a good husband. I shall say nothing of her personal qualifications, which certainly are admirable; her good nature, her charitable disposition, her modesty, are too well known to need any panegyric: but she hath one quality which existed in a high degree in that best of women, who is now one of the first of angels, which, as it is not of a glaring kind, more commonly escapes observation; so little indeed is it remarked, that I want a word to express it. I must use negatives on this occasion. I never heard anything of pertness, or what is called repartee, out of her mouth; no pretence to wit, much less to that kind of wisdom which is the result only of great learning and experience, the affectation of which, in a young woman, is as absurd as any of the affectations of an ape. No dictatorial sentiments, no judicial opinions, no profound criticisms. Whenever I have seen her in the company of men, she hath been all attention, with the modesty of a learner, not the forwardness of a

teacher. You'll pardon me for it, but I once, to try her only, desired her opinion on a point which was controverted between Mr Thwackum and Mr Square. To which she answered, with much sweetness, 'You will pardon me, good Mr Allworthy; I am sure you cannot in earnest think me capable of deciding any point in which two such gentlemen disagree.' Thwackum and Square, who both alike thought themselves sure of a favourable decision, seconded my request. She answered with the same good humour, 'I must absolutely be excused: for I will affront neither so much as to give my judgment on his side.' Indeed, she always shewed the highest deference to the understandings of men; a quality absolutely essential to the making a good wife. I shall only add, that as she is most apparently void of all affectation, this deference must be certainly real."

Here Blifil sighed bitterly; upon which Western, whose eyes were full of tears at the praise of Sophia, blubbered out, "Don't be chicken-hearted, for shat ha her, d—n me, shat ha her, if she was twenty times as good."

"Remember your promise, sir," cried Allworthy, "I was not to be interrupted." "Well, shat unt," answered the squire; "I won't speak another word."

"Now, my good friend," continued Allworthy, "I have dwelt so long on the merit of this young lady, partly as I really am in love with her character, and partly that fortune (for the match in that light is really advantageous on my nephew's side) might not be imagined to be my principal view in having so eagerly embraced the proposal. Indeed, I heartily wished to receive so great a jewel into my family; but though I may wish for many good things, I would not, therefore, steal them, or be guilty of any violence or injustice to possess myself of them. Now to force a woman into

a marriage contrary to her consent or approbation, is an act of such injustice and oppression, that I wish the laws of our country could restrain it; but a good conscience is never lawless in the worst regulated state, and will provide those laws for itself, which the neglect of legislators hath forgotten to supply. This is surely a case of that kind; for, is it not cruel, nay, impious, to force a woman into that state against her will; for her behaviour in which she is to be accountable to the highest and most dreadful court of judicature, and to answer at the peril of her soul? To discharge the matrimonial duties in an adequate manner is no easy task; and shall we lay this burthen upon a woman, while we at the same time deprive her of all that assistance which may enable her to undergo it? Shall we tear her very heart from her, while we enjoin her duties to which a whole heart is scarce equal? I must speak very plainly here. I think parents who act in this manner are accessories to all the guilt which their children afterwards incur, and of course must, before a just judge, expect to partake of their punishment; but if they could avoid this, good heaven! is there a soul who can bear the thought of having contributed to the damnation of his child?

"For these reasons, my best neighbour, as I see the inclinations of this young lady are most unhappily averse to my nephew, I must decline any further thoughts of the honour you intended him, though I assure you I shall always retain the most grateful sense of it."

"Well, sir," said Western (the froth bursting forth from his lips the moment they were uncorked), "you cannot say but I have heard you out, and now I expect you'll hear me; and if I don't answer every word on't, why then I'll consent to gee the matter up. First then, I desire you to answer me one question—Did not I beget her? did not I beget her? answer me

that. They say, indeed, it is a wise father that knows his own child; but I am sure I have the best title to her, for I bred her up. But I believe you will allow me to be her father, and if I be, am I not to govern my own child? I ask you that, am I not to govern my own child? and if I am to govern her in other matters, surely I am to govern her in this, which concerns her most. And what am I desiring all this while? Am I desiring her to do anything for me? to give me anything?—Zu much on t'other side, that I am only desiring her to take away half my estate now, and t'other half when I die. Well, and what is it all vor? Why, is unt it to make her happy? It's enough to make one mad to hear volks talk; if I was going to marry myself, then she would ha reason to cry and to blubber; but, on the contrary, han't I offered to bind down my land in such a manner, that I could not marry if I would, seeing as narro' woman upon earth would ha me. What the devil in hell can I do more? I contribute to her damnation!—Zounds! I'd zee all the world d—n'd bevore her little vinger should be hurt. Indeed, Mr Allworthy, you must excuse me, but I am surprized to hear you talk in zuch a manner, and I must say, take it how you will, that I thought you had more sense."

Allworthy resented this reflection only with a smile; nor could he, if he would have endeavoured it, have conveyed into that smile any mixture of malice or contempt. His smiles at folly were indeed such as we may suppose the angels bestow on the absurdities of mankind.

Blifil now desired to be permitted to speak a few words. "As to using any violence on the young lady, I am sure I shall never consent to it. My conscience will not permit me to use violence on any one, much less on a lady for whom, however cruel she is to me,

I shall always preserve the purest and sincerest affection; but yet I have read that women are seldom proof against perseverance. Why may I not hope then by such perseverance at last to gain those inclinations, in which for the future I shall, perhaps, have no rival; for as for this lord, Mr Western is so kind to prefer me to him; and sure, sir, you will not deny but that a parent hath at least a negative voice in these matters; nay, I have heard this very young lady herself say so more than once, and declare that she thought children inexcusable who married in direct opposition to the will of their parents. Besides, though the other ladies of the family seem to favour the pretensions of my lord, I do not find the lady herself is inclined to give him any countenance; alas! I am too well assured she is not; I am too sensible that wickedest of men remains uppermost in her heart."

"Ay, ay, so he does," cries Western.

"But surely," says Blifil, "when she hears of this murder which he hath committed, if the law should spare his life——"

"What's that?" cries Western. "Murder! hath he committed a murder, and is there any hopes of seeing him hanged?—Tol de rol, tol lol de rol." Here he fell a singing and capering about the room.

"Child," says Allworthy, "this unhappy passion of yours distresses me beyond measure. I heartily pity you, and would do every fair thing to promote your success."

"I desire no more," cries Blifil; "I am convinced my dear uncle hath a better opinion of me than to think that I myself would accept of more."

"Lookee," says Allworthy, "you have my leave to write, to visit, if she will permit it—but I insist on no thoughts of violence. I will have no confinement, nothing of that kind attempted."

"Well, well," cries the squire, "nothing of that kind shall be attempted; we will try a little longer what fair means will effect; and if this fellow be but hanged out of the way—Tol lol de rol! I never heard better news in my life—I warrant everything goes to my mind.—Do, prithee, dear Allworthy, come and dine with me at the Hercules Pillars: I have bespoke a shoulder of mutton roasted, and a spare-rib of pork, and a fowl and egg-sauce. There will be nobody but ourselves, unless we have a mind to have the landlord; for I have sent Parson Supple down to Basingstoke after my tobacco-box, which I left at an inn there, and I would not lose it for the world; for it is an old acquaintance of above twenty years' standing. I can tell you landlord is a vast comical bitch, you will like un hugely."

Mr Allworthy at last agreed to this invitation, and soon after the squire went off, singing and capering at the hopes of seeing the speedy tragical end of poor Jones.

When he was gone, Mr Allworthy resumed the aforesaid subject with much gravity. He told his nephew, "He wished with all his heart he would endeavour to conquer a passion, in which I cannot," says he, "flatter you with any hopes of succeeding. It is certainly a vulgar error, that aversion in a woman may be conquered by perseverance. Indifference may, perhaps, sometimes yield to it; but the usual triumphs gained by perseverance in a lover are over caprice, prudence, affectation, and often an exorbitant degree of levity, which excites women not over-warm in their constitutions to indulge their vanity by prolonging the time of courtship, even when they are well enough pleased with the object, and resolve (if they ever resolve at all) to make him a very pitiful amends in the end. But a fixed dislike, as I am afraid this is,

will rather gather strength than be conquered by time. Besides, my dear, I have another apprehension which you must excuse. I am afraid this passion which you have for this fine young creature hath her beautiful person too much for its object, and is unworthy of the name of that love which is the only foundation of matrimonial felicity. To admire, to like, and to long for the possession of a beautiful woman, without any regard to her sentiments towards us, is, I am afraid, too natural; but love, I believe, is the child of love only; at least, I am pretty confident that to love the creature who we are assured hates us is not in human nature. Examine your heart, therefore, thoroughly, my good boy, and if, upon examination, you have but the least suspicion of this kind, I am sure your own virtue and religion will impel you to drive so vicious a passion from your heart, and your good sense will soon enable you to do it without pain."

The reader may pretty well guess Blifil's answer; but, if he should be at a loss, we are not at present at leisure to satisfy him, as our history now hastens on to matters of higher importance, and we can no longer bear to be absent from Sophia.

Chapter ix.

An extraordinary scene between Sophia and her aunt.

THE lowing heifer and the bleating ewe, in herds and flocks, may ramble safe and unregarded through the pastures. These are, indeed, hereafter doomed to be the prey of man; yet many years are they suffered to enjoy their liberty undisturbed. But if a plump doe be discovered to have

escaped from the forest, and to repose herself in some field or grove, the whole parish is presently alarmed, every man is ready to set his dogs after her; and, if she is preserved from the rest by the good squire, it is only that he may secure her for his own eating.

I have often considered a very fine young woman of fortune and fashion, when first found strayed from the pale of her nursery, to be in pretty much the same situation with this doe. The town is immediately in an uproar; she is hunted from park to play, from court to assembly, from assembly to her own chamber, and rarely escapes a single season from the jaws of some devourer or other; for, if her friends protect her from some, it is only to deliver her over to one of their own chusing, often more disagreeable to her than any of the rest; while whole herds or flocks of other women securely, and scarce regarded, traverse the park, the play, the opera, and the assembly; and though, for the most part at least, they are at last devoured, yet for a long time do they wanton in liberty, without disturbance or controul.

Of all these paragons none ever tasted more of this persecution than poor Sophia. Her ill stars were not contented with all that she had suffered on account of Blifil, they now raised her another pursuer, who seemed likely to torment her no less than the other had done. For though her aunt was less violent, she was no less assiduous in teizing her, than her father had been before.

The servants were no sooner departed after dinner than Mrs Western, who had opened the matter to Sophia, informed her, "That she expected his lordship that very afternoon, and intended to take the first opportunity of leaving her alone with him." "If you do, madam," answered Sophia, with some spirit, "I shall take the first opportunity of leaving him by him-

self." "How! madam!" cries the aunt; "is this the return you make me for my kindness in relieving you from your confinement at your father's?" "You know, madam," said Sophia, "the cause of that confinement was a refusal to comply with my father in accepting a man I detested; and will my dear aunt, who hath relieved me from that distress, involve me in another equally bad?" "And do you think then, madam," answered Mrs Western, "that there is no difference between my Lord Fellamar and Mr Blifil?" "Very little, in my opinion," cries Sophia; "and, if I must be condemned to one, I would certainly have the merit of sacrificing myself to my father's pleasure." "Then my pleasure, I find," said the aunt, "hath very little weight with you; but that consideration shall not move me. I act from nobler motives. The view of aggrandizing my family, of ennobling yourself, is what I proceed upon. Have you no sense of ambition? Are there no charms in the thoughts of having a coronet on your coach?" "None, upon my honour," said Sophia. "A pincushion upon my coach would please me just as well." "Never mention honour," cries the aunt. "It becomes not the mouth of such a wretch. I am sorry, niece, you force me to use these words, but I cannot bear your groveling temper; you have none of the blood of the Westerns in you. But, however mean and base your own ideas are, you shall bring no imputation on mine. I will never suffer the world to say of me that I encouraged you in refusing one of the best matches in England; a match which, besides its advantage in fortune, would do honour to almost any family, and hath, indeed, in title, the advantage of ours." "Surely," says Sophia, "I am born deficient, and have not the senses with which other people are blessed; there must be certainly some sense which can relish the delights of sound and show, which

I have not; for surely mankind would not labour so much, nor sacrifice so much for the obtaining, nor would they be so elate and proud with possessing, what appeared to them, as it doth to me, the most insignificant of all trifles."

"No, no, miss," cries the aunt; "you are born with as many senses as other people; but I assure you you are not born with a sufficient understanding to make a fool of me, or to expose my conduct to the world; so I declare this to you, upon my word, and you know, I believe, how fixed my resolutions are, unless you agree to see his lordship this afternoon, I will, with my own hands, deliver you to-morrow morning to my brother, and will never henceforth interfere with you, nor see your face again." Sophia stood a few moments silent after this speech, which was uttered in a most angry and peremptory tone; and then, bursting into tears, she cryed, "Do with me, madam, whatever you please; I am the most miserable undone wretch upon earth; if my dear aunt forsakes me where shall I look for a protector?" "My dear niece," cries she, "you will have a very good protector in his lordship; a protector whom nothing but a hankering after that vile fellow Jones can make you decline." "Indeed, madam," said Sophia, "you wrong me. How can you imagine, after what you have shewn me, if I had ever any such thoughts, that I should not banish them for ever? If it will satisfy you, I will receive the sacrament upon it never to see his face again." "But, child, dear child," said the aunt, "be reasonable; can you invent a single objection?" "I have already, I think, told you a sufficient objection," answered Sophia. "What?" cries the aunt; "I remember none." "Sure, madam," said Sophia, "I told you he had used me in the rudest and vilest manner." "Indeed, child," answered she, "I never heard you, or did not

understand you:—but what do you mean by this rude, vile manner?" "Indeed, madam," said Sophia, "I am almost ashamed to tell you. He caught me in his arms, pulled me down upon the settee, and thrust his hand into my bosom, and kissed it with such violence that I have the mark upon my left breast at this moment." "Indeed!" said Mrs Western. "Yes, indeed, madam," answered Sophia; "my father luckily came in at that instant, or Heaven knows what rudeness he intended to have proceeded to." "I am astonished and confounded," cries the aunt. "No woman of the name of Western hath been ever treated so since we were a family. I would have torn the eyes of a prince out, if he had attempted such freedoms with me. It is impossible! sure, Sophia, you must invent this to raise my indignation against him." "I hope, madam," said Sophia, "you have too good an opinion of me to imagine me capable of telling an untruth. Upon my soul it is true." "I should have stabbed him to the heart, had I been present," returned the aunt. "Yet surely he could have no dishonourable design; it is impossible! he durst not: besides, his proposals shew he hath not; for they are not only honourable, but generous. I don't know; the age allows too great freedoms. A distant salute is all I would have allowed before the ceremony. I have had lovers formerly, not so long ago neither; several lovers, though I never would consent to marriage, and I never encouraged the least freedom. It is a foolish custom, and what I never would agree to. No man kissed more of me than my cheek. It is as much as one can bring oneself to give lips up to a husband; and, indeed, could I ever have been persuaded to marry, I believe I should not have soon been brought to endure so much." "You will pardon me, dear madam," said Sophia, "if I make one observation: you own you have had many lovers, and

the world knows it, even if you should deny it. You refused them all, and, I am convinced, one coronet at least among them." "You say true, dear Sophy," answered she; "I had once the offer of a title." "Why, then," said Sophia, "will you not suffer me to refuse this once?" "It is true, child," said she, "I have refused the offer of a title; but it was not so good an offer; that is, not so very, very good an offer." —"Yes, madam," said Sophia; "but you have had very great proposals from men of vast fortunes. It was not the first, nor the second, nor the third advantageous match that offered itself." "I own it was not," said she. "Well, madam," continued Sophia, "and why may not I expect to have a second, perhaps, better than this? You are now but a young woman, and I am convinced would not promise to yield to the first lover of fortune, nay, or of title too. I am a very young woman, and sure I need not despair." "Well, my dear, dear Sophy," cries the aunt, "what would you have me say?" "Why, I only beg that I may not be left alone, at least this evening; grant me that, and I will submit, if you think, after what is past, I ought to see him in your company." "Well, I will grant it," cries the aunt. "Sophy, you know I love you, and can deny you nothing. You know the easiness of my nature; I have not always been so easy. I have been formerly thought cruel; by the men, I mean. I was called the cruel Parthenissa. I have broke many a window that has had verses to the cruel Parthenissa in it. Sophy, I was never so handsome as you, and yet I had something of you formerly. I am a little altered. Kingdoms and states, as Tully Cicero says in his epistles, undergo alterations, and so must the human form." Thus run she on for near half an hour upon herself, and her conquests, and her cruelty, till the arrival of my lord, who, after a most tedious visit,

during which Mrs Western never once offered to leave the room, retired, not much more satisfied with the aunt than with the niece; for Sophia had brought her aunt into so excellent a temper, that she consented to almost everything her niece said; and agreed that a little distant behaviour might not be improper to so forward a lover.

Thus Sophia, by a little well-directed flattery, for which surely none will blame her, obtained a little ease for herself, and, at least, put off the evil day. And now we have seen our heroine in a better situation than she hath been for a long time before, we will look a little after Mr Jones, whom we left in the most deplorable situation that can be well imagined.

Chapter v.

Mrs Miller and Mr Nightingale visit Jones in the prison.

WHEN Mr Allworthy and his nephew went to meet Mr Western, Mrs Miller set forwards to her son-in-law's lodgings, in order to acquaint him with the accident which had befallen his friend Jones; but he had known it long before from Partridge (for Jones, when he left Mrs Miller, had been furnished with a room in the same house with Mr Nightingale). The good woman found her daughter under great affliction on account of Mr Jones, whom having comforted as well as she could, she set forwards to the Gatehouse, where she heard he was, and where Mr Nightingale was arrived before her.

The firmness and constancy of a true friend is a circumstance so extremely delightful to persons in any kind of distress, that the distress itself, if it be only

temporary, and admits of relief, is more than compensated by bringing this comfort with it. Nor are instances of this kind so rare as some superficial and inaccurate observers have reported. To say the truth, want of compassion is not to be numbered among our general faults. The black ingredient which fouls our disposition is envy. Hence our eye is seldom, I am afraid, turned upward to those who are manifestly greater, better, wiser, or happier than ourselves, without some degree of malignity; while we commonly look downwards on the mean and miserable with sufficient benevolence and pity. In fact, I have remarked, that most of the defects which have discovered themselves in the friendships within my observation have arisen from envy only: a hellish vice; and yet one from which I have known very few absolutely exempt. But enough of a subject which, if pursued, would lead me too far.

Whether it was that Fortune was apprehensive lest Jones should sink under the weight of his adversity, and that she might thus lose any future opportunity of tormenting him, or whether she really abated somewhat of her severity towards him, she seemed a little to relax her persecution, by sending him the company of two such faithful friends, and what is perhaps more rare, a faithful servant. For Partridge, though he had many imperfections, wanted not fidelity; and though fear would not suffer him to be hanged for his master, yet the world, I believe, could not have bribed him to desert his cause.

While Jones was expressing great satisfaction in the presence of his friends, Partridge brought an account that Mr Fitzpatrick was still alive, though the surgeon declared that he had very little hopes. Upon which, Jones fetching a deep sigh, Nightingale said to him, "My dear Tom, why should you afflict yourself so

upon an accident, which, whatever be the consequence, can be attended with no danger to you, and in which your conscience cannot accuse you of having been the least to blame? If the fellow should die, what have you done more than taken away the life of a ruffian in your own defence? So will the coroner's inquest certainly find it; and then you will be easily admitted to bail; and, though you must undergo the form of a trial, yet it is a trial which many men would stand for you for a shilling." "Come, come, Mr Jones," says Mrs Miller, "chear yourself up. I knew you could not be the aggressor, and so I told Mr Allworthy, and so he shall acknowledge too, before I have done with him."

Jones gravely answered, "That whatever might be his fate, he should always lament the having shed the blood of one of his fellow-creatures, as one of the highest misfortunes which could have befallen him. But I have another misfortune of the tenderest kind ——O! Mrs Miller, I have lost what I held most dear upon earth." "That must be a mistress," said Mrs Miller; "but come, come; I know more than you imagine" (for indeed Partridge had blabbed all); "and I have heard more than you know. Matters go better, I promise you, than you think; and I would not give Blifil sixpence for all the chance which he hath of the lady."

"Indeed, my dear friend, indeed," answered Jones, "you are an entire stranger to the cause of my grief. If you was acquainted with the story, you would allow my case admitted of no comfort. I apprehend no danger from Blifil. I have undone myself." "Don't despair," replied Mrs Miller; "you know not what a woman can do; and if anything be in my power, I promise you I will do it to serve you. It is my duty. My son, my dear Mr Nightingale, who is so

kind to tell me he hath obligations to you on the same account, knows it is my duty. Shall I go to the lady myself? I will say anything to her you would have me say."

"Thou best of women," cries Jones, taking her by the hand, "talk not of obligations to me;——but as you have been so kind to mention it, there is a favour which, perhaps, may be in your power. I see you are acquainted with the lady (how you came by your information I know not), who sits, indeed, very near my heart. If you could contrive to deliver this (giving her a paper from his pocket), I shall for ever acknowledge your goodness."

"Give it me," said Mrs Miller. "If I see it not in her own possession before I sleep, may my next sleep be my last! Comfort yourself, my good young man! be wise enough to take warning from past follies, and I warrant all shall be well, and I shall yet see you happy with the most charming young lady in the world; for I so hear from every one she is."

"Believe me, madam," said he, "I do not speak the common cant of one in my unhappy situation. Before this dreadful accident happened, I had resolved to quit a life of which I was become sensible of the wickedness as well as folly. I do assure you, notwithstanding the disturbances I have unfortunately occasioned in your house, for which I heartily ask your pardon, I am not an abandoned profligate. Though I have been hurried into vices, I do not approve a vicious character, nor will I ever, from this moment, deserve it."

Mrs Miller expressed great satisfaction in these declarations, in the sincerity of which she averred she had an entire faith; and now the remainder of the conversation past in the joint attempts of that good woman and Mr Nightingale to cheer the dejected

spirits of Mr Jones, in which they so far succeeded as to leave him much better comforted and satisfied than they found him; to which happy alteration nothing so much contributed as the kind undertaking of Mrs Miller to deliver his letter to Sophia, which he despaired of finding any means to accomplish; for when Black George produced the last from Sophia, he informed Partridge that she had strictly charged him, on pain of having it communicated to her father, not to bring her any answer. He was, moreover, not a little pleased to find he had so warm an advocate to Mr Allworthy himself in this good woman, who was, in reality, one of the worthiest creatures in the world.

After about an hour's visit from the lady (for Nightingale had been with him much longer), they both took their leave, promising to return to him soon; during which Mrs Miller said she hoped to bring him some good news from his mistress, and Mr Nightingale promised to enquire into the state of Mr Fitzpatrick's wound, and likewise to find out some of the persons who were present at the rencounter.

The former of these went directly in quest of Sophia, whither we likewise shall now attend her.

Chapter vi.

In which Mrs Miller pays a visit to Sophia.

ACCESS to the young lady was by no means difficult; for, as she lived now on a perfect friendly footing with her aunt, she was at full liberty to receive what visitants she pleased.

Sophia was dressing when she was acquainted that there was a gentlewoman below to wait on her. As

she was neither afraid, nor ashamed, to see any of her own sex, Mrs Miller was immediately admitted.

Curtsies and the usual ceremonials between women who are strangers to each other, being past, Sophia said, "I have not the pleasure to know you, madam." "No, madam," answered Mrs Miller, "and I must beg pardon for intruding upon you. But when you know what has induced me to give you this trouble, I hope——" "Pray, what is your business, madam?" said Sophia, with a little emotion. "Madam, we are not alone," replied Mrs Miller, in a low voice. "Go out, Betty," said Sophia.

When Betty was departed, Mrs Miller said, "I was desired, madam, by a very unhappy young gentleman, to deliver you this letter." Sophia changed colour when she saw the direction, well knowing the hand, and after some hesitation, said—"I could not conceive, madam, from your appearance, that your business had been of such a nature.—Whomever you brought this letter from, I shall not open it. I should be sorry to entertain an unjust suspicion of any one; but you are an utter stranger to me."

"If you will have patience, madam," answered Mrs Miller, "I will acquaint you who I am, and how I came by that letter." "I have no curiosity, madam, to know anything," cries Sophia; "but I must insist on your delivering that letter back to the person who gave it you."

Mrs Miller then fell upon her knees, and in the most passionate terms implored her compassion; to which Sophia answered: "Sure, madam, it is surprizing you should be so very strongly interested in the behalf of this person. I would not think, madam"—"No, madam," says Mrs Miller, "you shall not think anything but the truth. I will tell you all, and you will not wonder that I am interested. He is the best-

natured creature that ever was born."——She then began and related the story of Mr Anderson.—— After this she cried, "This, madam, this is his goodness; but I have much more tender obligations to him. He hath preserved my child."——Here, after shedding some tears, she related everything concerning that fact, suppressing only those circumstances which would have most reflected on her daughter, and concluded with saying, "Now, madam, you shall judge whether I can ever do enough for so kind, so good, so generous a young man; and sure he is the best and worthiest of all human beings."

The alterations in the countenance of Sophia had hitherto been chiefly to her disadvantage, and had inclined her complexion to too great paleness; but she now waxed redder, if possible, than vermilion, and cried, "I know not what to say; certainly what arises from gratitude cannot be blamed——But what service can my reading this letter do your friend, since I am resolved never——" Mrs Miller fell again to her entreaties, and begged to be forgiven, but she could not, she said, carry it back. "Well, madam," says Sophia, "I cannot help it, if you will force it upon me.—Certainly you may leave it whether I will or no." What Sophia meant, or whether she meant anything, I will not presume to determine; but Mrs Miller actually understood this as a hint, and presently laying the letter down on the table, took her leave, having first begged permission to wait again on Sophia; which request had neither assent nor denial.

The letter lay upon the table no longer than till Mrs Miller was out of sight; for then Sophia opened and read it.

This letter did very little service to his cause; for it consisted of little more than confessions of his own unworthiness, and bitter lamentations of despair, together

with the most solemn protestations of his unalterable fidelity to Sophia, of which, he said, he hoped to convince her, if he had ever more the honour of being admitted to her presence; and that he could account for the letter to Lady Bellaston in such a manner, that, though it would not entitle him to her forgiveness, he hoped at least to obtain it from her mercy. And concluded with vowing that nothing was ever less in his thoughts than to marry Lady Bellaston.

Though Sophia read the letter twice over with great attention, his meaning still remained a riddle to her; nor could her invention suggest to her any means to excuse Jones. She certainly remained very angry with him, though indeed Lady Bellaston took up so much of her resentment, that her gentle mind had but little left to bestow on any other person.

That lady was most unluckily to dine this very day with her aunt Western, and in the afternoon they were all three, by appointment, to go together to the opera, and thence to Lady Thomas Hatchet's drum. Sophia would have gladly been excused from all, but would not disoblige her aunt; and as to the arts of counterfeiting illness, she was so entirely a stranger to them, that it never once entered into her head. When she was drest, therefore, down she went, resolved to encounter all the horrors of the day, and a most disagreeable one it proved; for Lady Bellaston took every opportunity very civilly and slily to insult her; to all which her dejection of spirits disabled her from making any return; and, indeed, to confess the truth, she was at the very best but an indifferent mistress of repartee.

Another misfortune which befel poor Sophia was the company of Lord Fellamar, whom she met at the opera, and who attended her to the drum. And though both places were too publick to admit of any particularities, and she was farther relieved by the

musick at the one place, and by the cards at the other, she could not, however, enjoy herself in his company; for there is something of delicacy in women, which will not suffer them to be even easy in the presence of a man whom they know to have pretensions to them which they are disinclined to favour.

Having in this chapter twice mentioned a drum, a word which our posterity, it is hoped, will not understand in the sense it is here applied, we shall, notwithstanding our present haste, stop a moment to describe the entertainment here meant, and the rather as we can in a moment describe it.

A drum, then, is an assembly of well-dressed persons of both sexes, most of whom play at cards, and the rest do nothing at all; while the mistress of the house performs the part of the landlady at an inn, and like the landlady of an inn prides herself in the number of her guests, though she doth not always, like her, get anything by it.

No wonder then, as so much spirits must be required to support any vivacity in these scenes of dulness, that we hear persons of fashion eternally complaining of the want of them; a complaint confined entirely to upper life. How insupportable must we imagine this round of impertinence to have been to Sophia at this time; how difficult must she have found it to force the appearance of gaiety into her looks, when her mind dictated nothing but the tenderest sorrow, and when every thought was charged with tormenting ideas!

Night, however, at last restored her to her pillow, where we will leave her to soothe her melancholy at least, though incapable we fear of rest, and shall pursue our history, which, something whispers us, is now arrived at the eve of some great event.

Chapter vii.

A pathetic scene between Mr Allworthy and Mrs Miller.

MRS MILLER had a long discourse with Mr Allworthy, at his return from dinner, in which she acquainted him with Jones's having unfortunately lost all which he was pleased to bestow on him at their separation; and with the distresses to which that loss had subjected him; of all which she had received a full account from the faithful retailer Partridge. She then explained the obligations she had to Jones; not that she was entirely explicit with regard to her daughter; for though she had the utmost confidence in Mr Allworthy, and though there could be no hopes of keeping an affair secret which was unhappily known to more than half a dozen, yet she could not prevail with herself to mention those circumstances which reflected most on the chastity of poor Nancy, but smothered that part of her evidence as cautiously as if she had been before a judge, and the girl was now on her trial for the murder of a bastard.

Allworthy said, there were few characters so absolutely vicious as not to have the least mixture of good in them. "However," says he, "I cannot deny but that you have some obligations to the fellow, bad as he is, and I shall therefore excuse what hath past already, but must insist you never mention his name to me more; for, I promise you, it was upon the fullest and plainest evidence that I resolved to take the measures I have taken." "Well, sir," says she, "I make not the least doubt but time will shew all matters in their true and natural colours, and that you will be convinced this poor young man deserves better of you than some other folks that shall be nameless."

"Madam," cries Allworthy, a little ruffled, "I will

not hear any reflections on my nephew; and if ever you say a word more of that kind, I will depart from your house that instant. He is the worthiest and best of men; and I once more repeat it to you, he hath carried his friendship to this man to a blameable length, by too long concealing facts of the blackest die. The ingratitude of the wretch to this good young man is what I most resent; for, madam, I have the greatest reason to imagine he had laid a plot to supplant my nephew in my favour, and to have disinherited him."

"I am sure, sir," answered Mrs Miller, a little frightened (for, though Mr Allworthy had the utmost sweetness and benevolence in his smiles, he had great terror in his frowns), "I shall never speak against any gentleman you are pleased to think well of. I am sure, sir, such behaviour would very little become me, especially when the gentleman is your nearest relation; but, sir, you must not be angry with me, you must not indeed, for my good wishes to this poor wretch. Sure I may call him so now, though once you would have been angry with me if I had spoke of him with the least disrespect. How often have I heard you call him your son? How often have you prattled to me of him with all the fondness of a parent? Nay, sir, I cannot forget the many tender expressions, the many good things you have told me of his beauty, and his parts, and his virtues; of his good-nature and generosity. I am sure, sir, I cannot forget them, for I find them all true. I have experienced them in my own cause. They have preserved my family. You must pardon my tears, sir, indeed you must. When I consider the cruel reverse of fortune which this poor youth, to whom I am so much obliged, hath suffered; when I consider the loss of your favour, which I know he valued more than his life, I must, I must lament him. If you had a dagger in your hand, ready to plunge into my heart,

I must lament the misery of one whom you have loved, and I shall ever love."

Allworthy was pretty much moved with this speech, but it seemed not to be with anger; for, after a short silence, taking Mrs Miller by the hand, he said very affectionately to her, "Come, madam, let us consider a little about your daughter. I cannot blame you for rejoicing in a match which promises to be advantageous to her, but you know this advantage, in a great measure, depends on the father's reconciliation. I know Mr Nightingale very well, and have formerly had concerns with him; I will make him a visit, and endeavour to serve you in this matter. I believe he is a worldly man; but as this is an only son, and the thing is now irretrievable, perhaps he may in time be brought to reason. I promise you I will do all I can for you."

Many were the acknowledgments which the poor woman made to Allworthy for this kind and generous offer, nor could she refrain from taking this occasion again to express her gratitude towards Jones, "to whom," said she, "I owe the opportunity of giving you, sir, this present trouble." Allworthy gently stopped her; but he was too good a man to be really offended with the effects of so noble a principle as now actuated Mrs Miller; and indeed, had not this new affair inflamed his former anger against Jones, it is possible he might have been a little softened towards him, by the report of an action which malice itself could not have derived from an evil motive.

Mr Allworthy and Mrs Miller had been above an hour together, when their conversation was put an end to by the arrival of Blifil and another person, which other person was no less than Mr Dowling, the attorney, who was now become a great favourite with Mr Blifil, and whom Mr Allworthy, at the desire of his nephew, had made his steward; and had likewise

recommended him to Mr Western, from whom the attorney received a promise of being promoted to the same office upon the first vacancy; and, in the meantime, was employed in transacting some affairs which the squire then had in London in relation to a mortgage.

This was the principal affair which then brought Mr Dowling to town; therefore he took the same opportunity to charge himself with some money for Mr Allworthy, and to make a report to him of some other business; in all which, as it was of much too dull a nature to find any place in this history, we will leave the uncle, nephew, and their lawyer concerned, and resort to other matters.

Chapter viii.

Containing various matters.

BEFORE we return to Mr Jones, we will take one more view of Sophia.

Though that young lady had brought her aunt into great good humour by those soothing methods which we have before related, she had not brought her in the least to abate of her zeal for the match with Lord Fellamar. This zeal was now inflamed by Lady Bellaston, who had told her the preceding evening, that she was well satisfied from the conduct of Sophia, and from her carriage to his lordship, that all delays would be dangerous, and that the only way to succeed was to press the match forward with such rapidity that the young lady should have no time to reflect, and be obliged to consent while she scarce knew what she did; in which manner, she said, one-half of the marriages among people of condition were brought

about. A fact very probably true, and to which, I suppose, is owing the mutual tenderness which afterwards exists among so many happy couples.

A hint of the same kind was given by the same lady to Lord Fellamar; and both these so readily embraced the advice that the very next day was, at his lordship's request, appointed by Mrs Western for a private interview between the young parties. This was communicated to Sophia by her aunt, and insisted upon in such high terms, that, after having urged everything she possibly could invent against it without the least effect, she at last agreed to give the highest instance of complacence which any young lady can give, and consented to see his lordship.

As conversations of this kind afford no great entertainment, we shall be excused from reciting the whole that past at this interview; in which, after his lordship had made many declarations of the most pure and ardent passion to the silent blushing Sophia, she at last collected all the spirits she could raise, and with a trembling low voice said, "My lord, you must be yourself conscious whether your former behaviour to me hath been consistent with the professions you now make." "Is there," answered he, "no way by which I can atone for madness? what I did I am afraid must have too plainly convinced you, that the violence of love had deprived me of my senses." "Indeed, my lord," said she, "it is in your power to give me a proof of an affection which I much rather wish to encourage, and to which I should think myself more beholden." "Name it, madam," said my lord, very warmly. "My lord," says she, looking down upon her fan, "I know you must be sensible how uneasy this pretended passion of yours hath made me." "Can you be so cruel to call it pretended?" says he. "Yes, my lord," answered Sophia, "all professions of love to

those whom we persecute are most insulting pretences. This pursuit of yours is to me a most cruel persecution: nay, it is taking a most ungenerous advantage of my unhappy situation." "Most lovely, most adorable charmer, do not accuse me," cries he, "of taking an ungenerous advantage, while I have no thoughts but what are directed to your honour and interest, and while I have no view, no hope, no ambition, but to throw myself, honour, fortune, everything at your feet." "My lord," says she, "it is that fortune and those honours which gave you the advantage of which I complain. These are the charms which have seduced my relations, but to me they are things indifferent. If your lordship will merit my gratitude, there is but one way." "Pardon me, divine creature," said he, "there can be none. All I can do for you is so much your due, and will give me so much pleasure, that there is no room for your gratitude." "Indeed, my lord," answered she, "you may obtain my gratitude, my good opinion, every kind thought and wish which it is in my power to bestow; nay, you may obtain them with ease, for sure to a generous mind it must be easy to grant my request. Let me beseech you, then, to cease a pursuit in which you can never have any success. For your own sake as well as mine I entreat this favour; for sure you are too noble to have any pleasure in tormenting an unhappy creature. What can your lordship propose but uneasiness to yourself by a perseverance, which, upon my honour, upon my soul, cannot, shall not prevail with me, whatever distresses you may drive me to." Here my lord fetched a deep sigh, and then said—"Is it then, madam, that I am so unhappy to be the object of your dislike and scorn; or will you pardon me if I suspect there is some other?" Here he hesitated, and Sophia answered with some spirit, "My lord, I shall not be accountable to you for the

reasons of my conduct. I am obliged to your lordship for the generous offer you have made; I own it is beyond either my deserts or expectations; yet I hope, my lord, you will not insist on my reasons, when I declare I cannot accept it." Lord Fellamar returned much to this, which we do not perfectly understand, and perhaps it could not all be strictly reconciled either to sense or grammar; but he concluded his ranting speech with saying, "That if she had pre-engaged herself to any gentleman, however unhappy it would make him, he should think himself bound in honour to desist." Perhaps my lord laid too much emphasis on the word gentleman; for we cannot else well account for the indignation with which he inspired Sophia, who, in her answer, seemed greatly to resent some affront he had given her.

While she was speaking, with her voice more raised than usual, Mrs Western came into the room, the fire glaring in her cheeks, and the flames bursting from her eyes. "I am ashamed," says she, "my lord, of the reception which you have met with. I assure your lordship we are all sensible of the honour done us; and I must tell you, Miss Western, the family expect a different behaviour from you." Here my lord interfered on behalf of the young lady, but to no purpose; the aunt proceeded till Sophia pulled out her handkerchief, threw herself into a chair, and burst into a violent fit of tears.

The remainder of the conversation between Mrs Western and his lordship, till the latter withdrew, consisted of bitter lamentations on his side, and on hers of the strongest assurances that her niece should and would consent to all he wished. "Indeed, my lord," says she, "the girl hath had a foolish education, neither adapted to her fortune nor her family. Her father, I am sorry to say it, is to blame for everything.

The girl hath silly country notions of bashfulness. Nothing else, my lord, upon my honour; I am convinced she hath a good understanding at the bottom, and will be brought to reason."

This last speech was made in the absence of Sophia; for she had some time before left the room, with more appearance of passion than she had ever shown on any occasion; and now his lordship, after many expressions of thanks to Mrs Western, many ardent professions of passion which nothing could conquer, and many assurances of perseverance, which Mrs Western highly encouraged, took his leave for this time.

Before we relate what now passed between Mrs Western and Sophia, it may be proper to mention an unfortunate accident which had happened, and which had occasioned the return of Mrs Western with so much fury, as we have seen.

The reader then must know that the maid who at present attended on Sophia was recommended by Lady Bellaston, with whom she had lived for some time in the capacity of a comb-brush: she was a very sensible girl, and had received the strictest instructions to watch her young lady very carefully. These instructions, we are sorry to say, were communicated to her by Mrs Honour, into whose favour Lady Bellaston had now so ingratiated herself, that the violent affection which the good waiting-woman had formerly borne to Sophia was entirely obliterated by that great attachment which she had to her new mistress.

Now, when Mrs Miller was departed, Betty (for that was the name of the girl), returning to her young lady, found her very attentively engaged in reading a long letter, and the visible emotions which she betrayed on that occasion might have well accounted for some suspicions which the girl entertained; but indeed they had yet a stronger foundation, for she had overheard

the whole scene which passed between Sophia and Mrs Miller.

Mrs Western was acquainted with all this matter by Betty, who, after receiving many commendations and some rewards for her fidelity, was ordered, that, if the woman who brought the letter came again, she should introduce her to Mrs Western herself.

Unluckily, Mrs Miller returned at the very time when Sophia was engaged with his lordship. Betty, according to order, sent her directly to the aunt; who, being mistress of so many circumstances relating to what had past the day before, easily imposed upon the poor woman to believe that Sophia had communicated the whole affair; and so pumped everything out of her which she knew relating to the letter and relating to Jones.

This poor creature might, indeed, be called simplicity itself. She was one of that order of mortals who are apt to believe everything which is said to them; to whom nature hath neither indulged the offensive nor defensive weapons of deceit, and who are consequently liable to be imposed upon by any one who will only be at the expense of a little falshood for that purpose. Mrs Western, having drained Mrs Miller of all she knew, which, indeed, was but little, but which was sufficient to make the aunt suspect a great deal, dismissed her with assurances that Sophia would not see her, that she would send no answer to the letter, nor ever receive another; nor did she suffer her to depart without a handsome lecture on the merits of an office to which she could afford no better name than that of procuress.—This discovery had greatly discomposed her temper, when, coming into the apartment next to that in which the lovers were, she overheard Sophia very warmly protesting against his lordship's addresses. At which the rage already kindled burst forth, and she

rushed in upon her niece in a most furious manner, as we have already described, together with what past at that time till his lordship's departure.

No sooner was Lord Fellamar gone than Mrs Western returned to Sophia, whom she upbraided in the most bitter terms for the ill use she had made of the confidence reposed in her; and for her treachery in conversing with a man with whom she had offered but the day before to bind herself in the most solemn oath never more to have any conversation. Sophia protested she had maintained no such conversation. "How, how! Miss Western," said the aunt; "will you deny your receiving a letter from him yesterday?" "A letter, madam!" answered Sophia, somewhat surprized. "It is not very well bred, miss," replies the aunt, "to repeat my words. I say a letter, and I insist upon your showing it me immediately. "I scorn a lie, madam," said Sophia; "I did receive a letter, but it was without my desire, and, indeed, I may say, against my consent." "Indeed, indeed, miss," cries the aunt, "you ought to be ashamed of owning you had received it at all; but where is the letter? for I will see it."

To this peremptory demand, Sophia paused some time before she returned an answer; and at last only excused herself by declaring she had not the letter in her pocket, which was, indeed, true; upon which her aunt, losing all manner of patience, asked her niece this short question, whether she would resolve to marry Lord Fellamar, or no? to which she received the strongest negative. Mrs Western then replied with an oath, or something very like one, that she would early the next morning deliver her back into her father's hand.

Sophia then began to reason with her aunt in the following manner:—"Why, madam, must I of necessity be forced to marry at all? Consider how cruel

you would have thought it in your own case, and how much kinder your parents were in leaving you to your liberty. What have I done to forfeit this liberty? I will never marry contrary to my father's consent, nor without asking yours——And when I ask the consent of either improperly, it will be then time enough to force some other marriage upon me." "Can I bear to hear this," cries Mrs Western, "from a girl who hath now a letter from a murderer in her pocket?" "I have no such letter, I promise you," answered Sophia; "and, if he be a murderer, he will soon be in no condition to give you any further disturbance." "How, Miss Western!" said the aunt, "have you the assurance to speak of him in this manner; to own your affection for such a villain to my face?" "Sure, madam," said Sophia, "you put a very strange construction on my words." "Indeed, Miss Western," cries the lady, "I shall not bear this usage; you have learnt of your father this manner of treating me; he hath taught you to give me the lie. He hath totally ruined you by this false system of education; and, please heaven, he shall have the comfort of its fruits; for once more I declare to you, that to-morrow morning I will carry you back. I will withdraw all my forces from the field, and remain henceforth, like the wise king of Prussia, in a state of perfect neutrality. You are both too wise to be regulated by my measures; so prepare yourself, for to-morrow morning you shall evacuate this house."

Sophia remonstrated all she could; but her aunt was deaf to all she said. In this resolution therefore we must at present leave her, as there seems to be no hopes of bringing her to change it.

Chapter ix.

What happened to Mr Jones in the prison.

MR JONES passed about twenty-four melancholy hours by himself, unless when relieved by the company of Partridge, before Mr Nightingale returned; not that this worthy young man had deserted or forgot his friend; for, indeed, he had been much the greatest part of the time employed in his service.

He had heard, upon enquiry, that the only persons who had seen the beginning of the unfortunate rencounter were a crew belonging to a man-of-war which then lay at Deptford. To Deptford therefore he went in search of this crew, where he was informed that the men he sought after were all gone ashore. He then traced them from place to place, till at last he found two of them drinking together, with a third person, at a hedge-tavern near Aldersgate.

Nightingale desired to speak with Jones by himself (for Partridge was in the room when he came in). As soon as they were alone, Nightingale, taking Jones by the hand, cried, "Come, my brave friend, be not too much dejected at what I am going to tell you—— I am sorry I am the messenger of bad news; but I think it my duty to tell you." "I guess already what that bad news is," cries Jones. "The poor gentleman then is dead."——"I hope not," answered Nightingale. "He was alive this morning; though I will not flatter you; I fear, from the accounts I could get, that his wound is mortal. But if the affair be exactly as you told it, your own remorse would be all you would have reason to apprehend, let what would happen; but forgive me, my dear Tom, if I entreat you to make the worst of your story to your friends. If you dis-

guise anything to us, you will only be an enemy to yourself."

"What reason, my dear Jack, have I ever given you," said Jones, "to stab me with so cruel a suspicion?" "Have patience," cries Nightingale, "and I will tell you all. After the most diligent enquiry I could make, I at last met with two of the fellows who were present at this unhappy accident, and I am sorry to say, they do not relate the story so much in your favour as you yourself have told it." "Why, what do they say?" cries Jones. "Indeed what I am sorry to repeat, as I am afraid of the consequence of it to you. They say that they were at too great a distance to overhear any words that passed between you: but they both agree that the first blow was given by you." "Then, upon my soul," answered Jones, "they injure me. He not only struck me first, but struck me without the least provocation. What should induce those villains to accuse me falsely?" "Nay, that I cannot guess," said Nightingale, "and if you yourself, and I, who am so heartily your friend, cannot conceive a reason why they should belie you, what reason will an indifferent court of justice be able to assign why they should not believe them? I repeated the question to them several times, and so did another gentleman who was present, who, I believe, is a seafaring man, and who really acted a very friendly part by you; for he begged them often to consider that there was the life of a man in the case; and asked them over and over, if they were certain; to which they both answered, that they were, and would abide by their evidence upon oath. For heaven's sake, my dear friend, recollect yourself; for, if this should appear to be the fact, it will be your business to think in time of making the best of your interest. I would not shock you; but you know, I believe, the severity

of the law, whatever verbal provocations may have been given you." "Alas! my friend," cries Jones, "what interest hath such a wretch as I? Besides, do you think I would even wish to live with the reputation of a murderer? If I had any friends (as, alas! I have none), could I have the confidence to solicit them to speak in the behalf of a man condemned for the blackest crime in human nature? Believe me, I have no such hope; but I have some reliance on a throne still greatly superior; which will, I am certain, afford me all the protection I merit."

He then concluded with many solemn and vehement protestations of the truth of what he had at first asserted.

The faith of Nightingale was now again staggered, and began to incline to credit his friend, when Mrs Miller appeared, and made a sorrowful report of the success of her embassy; which when Jones had heard, he cried out most heroically, "Well, my friend, I am now indifferent as to what shall happen, at least with regard to my life; and if it be the will of Heaven that I shall make an atonement with that for the blood I have spilt, I hope the Divine Goodness will one day suffer my honour to be cleared, and that the words of a dying man, at least, will be believed, so far as to justify his character."

A very mournful scene now past between the prisoner and his friends, at which, as few readers would have been pleased to be present, so few, I believe, will desire to hear it particularly related. We will, therefore, pass on to the entrance of the turnkey, who acquainted Jones that there was a lady without who desired to speak with him when he was at leisure.

Jones declared his surprize at this message. He said, "He knew no lady in the world whom he could possibly expect to see there." However, as he saw no

reason to decline seeing any person, Mrs Miller and Mr Nightingale presently took their leave, and he gave orders to have the lady admitted.

If Jones was surprized at the news of a visit from a lady, how greatly was he astonished when he discovered this lady to be no other than Mrs Waters! In this astonishment then we shall leave him awhile, in order to cure the surprize of the reader, who will likewise, probably, not a little wonder at the arrival of this lady.

Who this Mrs Waters was, the reader pretty well knows; what she was, he must be perfectly satisfied. He will therefore be pleased to remember that this lady departed from Upton in the same coach with Mr Fitzpatrick and the other Irish gentleman, and in their company travelled to Bath.

Now there was a certain office in the gift of Mr Fitzpatrick at that time vacant, namely that of a wife: for the lady who had lately filled that office had resigned, or at least deserted her duty. Mr Fitzpatrick therefore, having thoroughly examined Mrs Waters on the road, found her extremely fit for the place, which, on their arrival at Bath, he presently conferred upon her, and she without any scruple accepted. As husband and wife this gentleman and lady continued together all the time they stayed at Bath, and as husband and wife they arrived together in town.

Whether Mr Fitzpatrick was so wise a man as not to part with one good thing till he had secured another, which he had at present only a prospect of regaining; or whether Mrs Waters had so well discharged her office, that he intended still to retain her as principal, and to make his wife (as is often the case) only her deputy, I will not say; but certain it is, he never mentioned his wife to her, never communicated to her

the letter given him by Mrs Western, nor ever once hinted his purpose of repossessing his wife; much less did he ever mention the name of Jones. For, though he intended to fight with him wherever he met him, he did not imitate those prudent persons who think a wife, a mother, a sister, or sometimes a whole family, the safest seconds on these occasions. The first account therefore which she had of all this was delivered to her from his lips, after he was brought home from the tavern where his wound had been drest.

As Mr Fitzpatrick, however, had not the clearest way of telling a story at any time, and was now, perhaps, a little more confused than usual, it was some time before she discovered that the gentleman who had given him this wound was the very same person from whom her heart had received a wound, which, though not of a mortal kind, was yet so deep that it had left a considerable scar behind it. But no sooner was she acquainted that Mr Jones himself was the man who had been committed to the Gatehouse for this supposed murder, than she took the first opportunity of committing Mr Fitzpatrick to the care of his nurse, and hastened away to visit the conqueror.

She now entered the room with an air of gaiety, which received an immediate check from the melancholy aspect of poor Jones, who started and blessed himself when he saw her. Upon which she said, "Nay, I do not wonder at your surprize; I believe you did not expect to see me; for few gentlemen are troubled here with visits from any lady, unless a wife. You see the power you have over me, Mr Jones. Indeed, I little thought, when we parted at Upton, that our next meeting would have been in such a place." "Indeed, madam," says Jones, "I must look upon this visit as kind; few will follow the miserable, especially to such dismal habitations." "I protest, Mr Jones,"

says she, "I can hardly persuade myself you are the same agreeable fellow I saw at Upton. Why, your face is more miserable than any dungeon in the universe. What can be the matter with you?" "I thought, madam," said Jones, "as you knew of my being here, you knew the unhappy reason." "Pugh!" says she, "you have pinked a man in a duel, that's all." Jones exprest some indignation at this levity, and spoke with the utmost contrition for what had happened. To which she answered, "Well, then, sir, if you take it so much to heart, I will relieve you; the gentleman is not dead, and, I am pretty confident, is in no danger of dying. The surgeon, indeed, who first dressed him was a young fellow, and seemed desirous of representing his case to be as bad as possible, that he might have the more honour from curing him: but the king's surgeon hath seen him since, and says, unless from a fever, of which there are at present no symptoms, he apprehends not the least danger of life." Jones shewed great satisfaction in his countenance at this report; upon which she affirmed the truth of it, adding, "By the most extraordinary accident in the world I lodge at the same house; and have seen the gentleman, and I promise you he doth you justice, and says, whatever be the consequence, that he was entirely the aggressor, and that you was not in the least to blame."

Jones expressed the utmost satisfaction at the account which Mrs Waters brought him. He then informed her of many things which she well knew before, as who Mr Fitzpatrick was, the occasion of his resentment, &c. He likewise told her several facts of which she was ignorant, as the adventure of the muff, and other particulars, concealing only the name of Sophia. He then lamented the follies and vices of which he had been guilty; every one of which, he said, had been attended with such ill consequences, that he should be unpardon-

able if he did not take warning, and quit those vicious courses for the future. He lastly concluded with assuring her of his resolution to sin no more, lest a worse thing should happen to him.

Mrs Waters with great pleasantry ridiculed all this, as the effects of low spirits and confinement. She repeated some witticisms about the devil when he was sick, and told him, "She doubted not but shortly to see him at liberty, and as lively a fellow as ever; and then," says she, "I don't question but your conscience will be safely delivered of all these qualms that it is now so sick in breeding."

Many more things of this kind she uttered, some of which it would do her no great honour, in the opinion of some readers, to remember; nor are we quite certain but that the answers made by Jones would be treated with ridicule by others. We shall therefore suppress the rest of this conversation, and only observe that it ended at last with perfect innocence, and much more to the satisfaction of Jones than of the lady; for the former was greatly transported with the news she had brought him; but the latter was not altogether so pleased with the penitential behaviour of a man whom she had, at her first interview, conceived a very different opinion of from what she now entertained of him.

Thus the melancholy occasioned by the report of Mr Nightingale was pretty well effaced; but the dejection into which Mrs Miller had thrown him still continued. The account she gave so well tallied with the words of Sophia herself in her letter, that he made not the least doubt but that she had disclosed his letter to her aunt, and had taken a fixed resolution to abandon him. The torments this thought gave him were to be equalled only by a piece of news which fortune had yet in store for him, and which we shall communicate in the second chapter of the ensuing book.

BOOK XVIII.

CONTAINING ABOUT SIX DAYS.

Chapter i.

A farewel to the reader.

WE are now, reader, arrived at the last stage of our long journey. As we have, therefore, travelled together through so many pages, let us behave to one another like fellow-travellers in a stage coach, who have passed several days in the company of each other; and who, notwithstanding any bickerings or little animosities which may have occurred on the road, generally make all up at last, and mount, for the last time, into their vehicle with chearfulness and good humour; since after this one stage, it may possibly happen to us, as it commonly happens to them, never to meet more.

As I have here taken up this simile, give me leave to carry it a little farther. I intend, then, in this last book, to imitate the good company I have mentioned in their last journey. Now, it is well known that all jokes and raillery are at this time laid aside; whatever characters any of the passengers have for the jest-sake personated on the road are now thrown off, and the conversation is usually plain and serious.

In the same manner, if I have now and then, in the

course of this work, indulged any pleasantry for thy entertainment, I shall here lay it down. The variety of matter, indeed, which I shall be obliged to cram into this book, will afford no room for any of those ludicrous observations which I have elsewhere made, and which may sometimes, perhaps, have prevented thee from taking a nap when it was beginning to steal upon thee. In this last book thou wilt find nothing (or at most very little) of that nature. All will be plain narrative only; and, indeed, when thou hast perused the many great events which this book will produce, thou wilt think the number of pages contained in it scarce sufficient to tell the story.

And now, my friend, I take this opportunity (as I shall have no other) of heartily wishing thee well. If I have been an entertaining companion to thee, I promise thee it is what I have desired. If in anything I have offended, it was really without any intention. Some things, perhaps, here said, may have hit thee or thy friends; but I do most solemnly declare they were not pointed at thee or them. I question not but thou hast been told, among other stories of me, that thou wast to travel with a very scurrilous fellow; but whoever told thee so did me an injury. No man detests and despises scurrility more than myself; nor hath any man more reason; for none hath ever been treated with more; and what is a very severe fate, I have had some of the abusive writings of those very men fathered upon me, who, in other of their works, have abused me themselves with the utmost virulence.

All these works, however, I am well convinced, will be dead long before this page shall offer itself to thy perusal; for however short the period may be of my own performances, they will most probably outlive their own infirm author, and the weakly productions of his abusive contemporaries.

Chapter ij.

Containing a very tragical incident.

WHILE Jones was employed in those unpleasant meditations, with which we left him tormenting himself, Partridge came stumbling into the room with his face paler than ashes, his eyes fixed in his head, his hair standing an end, and every limb trembling. In short, he looked as he would have done had he seen a spectre, or had he, indeed, been a spectre himself.

Jones, who was little subject to fear, could not avoid being somewhat shocked at this sudden appearance. He did, indeed, himself change colour, and his voice a little faultered while he asked him, What was the matter?

"I hope, sir," said Partridge, "you will not be angry with me. Indeed I did not listen, but I was obliged to stay in the outward room. I am sure I wish I had been a hundred miles off, rather than have heard what I have heard." "Why, what is the matter?" said Jones. "The matter, sir? O good Heaven!" answered Partridge, "was that woman who is just gone out the woman who was with you at Upton?" "She was, Partridge," cried Jones. "And did you really, sir, go to bed with that woman?" said he, trembling.—"I am afraid what past between us is no secret," said Jones.—"Nay, but pray, sir, for Heaven's sake, sir, answer me," cries Partridge. "You know I did," cries Jones. "Why then, the Lord have mercy upon your soul, and forgive you," cries Partridge; "but as sure as I stand here alive, you have been a-bed with your own mother."

Upon these words Jones became in a moment a greater picture of horror than Partridge himself. He was, indeed, for some time struck dumb with amazement,

and both stood staring wildly at each other. At last his words found way, and in an interrupted voice he said, "How! how! what's this you tell me?" "Nay, sir," cries Partridge, "I have not breath enough left to tell you now, but what I have said is most certainly true.—That woman who now went out is your own mother. How unlucky was it for you, sir, that I did not happen to see her at that time, to have prevented it! Sure the devil himself must have contrived to bring about this wickedness."

"Sure," cries Jones, "Fortune will never have done with me till she hath driven me to distraction. But why do I blame Fortune? I am myself the cause of all my misery. All the dreadful mischiefs which have befallen me are the consequences only of my own folly and vice. What thou hast told me, Partridge, hath almost deprived me of my senses! And was Mrs Waters, then—but why do I ask? for thou must certainly know her——If thou hast any affection for me, nay, if thou hast any pity, let me beseech thee to fetch this miserable woman back again to me. O good Heavens! incest——with a mother! To what am I reserved!" He then fell into the most violent and frantic agonies of grief and despair, in which Partridge declared he would not leave him; but at last, having vented the first torrent of passion, he came a little to himself; and then, having acquainted Partridge that he would find this wretched woman in the same house where the wounded gentleman was lodged, he despatched him in quest of her.

If the reader will please to refresh his memory, by turning to the scene at Upton, in the ninth book, he will be apt to admire the many strange accidents which unfortunately prevented any interview between Partridge and Mrs Waters, when she spent a whole day there with Mr Jones. Instances of this kind we may

frequently observe in life, where the greatest events are produced by a nice train of little circumstances; and more than one example of this may be discovered by the accurate eye, in this our history.

After a fruitless search of two or three hours, Partridge returned back to his master, without having seen Mrs Waters. Jones, who was in a state of desperation at his delay, was almost raving mad when he brought him his account. He was not long, however, in this condition before he received the following letter:

"SIR,

"Since I left you I have seen a gentleman, from whom I have learned something concerning you which greatly surprizes and affects me; but as I have not at present leisure to communicate a matter of such high importance, you must suspend your curiosity till our next meeting, which shall be the first moment I am able to see you. O, Mr Jones, little did I think, when I past that happy day at Upton, the reflection upon which is like to embitter all my future life, who it was to whom I owed such perfect happiness. Believe me to be ever sincerely your unfortunate

"J. WATERS."

"*P.S.* I would have you comfort yourself as much as possible, for Mr Fitzpatrick is in no manner of danger; so that whatever other grievous crimes you may have to repent of, the guilt of blood is not among the number."

Jones having read the letter, let it drop (for he was unable to hold it, and indeed had scarce the use of any one of his faculties). Partridge took it up, and having received consent by silence, read it likewise; nor had it upon him a less sensible effect. The pencil, and not the pen, should describe the horrors which appeared

in both their countenances. While they both remained speechless the turnkey entered the room, and, without taking any notice of what sufficiently discovered itself in the faces of them both, acquainted Jones that a man without desired to speak with him. This person was presently introduced, and was no other than Black George.

As sights of horror were not so usual to George as they were to the turnkey, he instantly saw the great disorder which appeared in the face of Jones. This he imputed to the accident that had happened, which was reported in the very worst light in Mr Western's family; he concluded, therefore, that the gentleman was dead, and that Mr Jones was in a fair way of coming to a shameful end. A thought which gave him much uneasiness; for George was of a compassionate disposition, and notwithstanding a small breach of friendship which he had been over-tempted to commit, was, in the main, not insensible of the obligations he had formerly received from Mr Jones.

The poor fellow, therefore, scarce refrained from a tear at the present sight. He told Jones he was heartily sorry for his misfortunes, and begged him to consider if he could be of any manner of service. "Perhaps, sir," said he, "you may want a little matter of money upon this occasion; if you do, sir, what little I have is heartily at your service."

Jones shook him very heartily by the hand, and gave him many thanks for the kind offer he had made; but answered, "He had not the least want of that kind." Upon which George began to press his services more eagerly than before. Jones again thanked him, with assurances that he wanted nothing which was in the power of any man living to give. "Come, come, my good master," answered George, "do not take the matter so much to heart. Things may end better than

you imagine; to be sure you an't the first gentleman who hath killed a man, and yet come off." "You are wide of the matter, George," said Partridge, "the gentleman is not dead, nor like to die. Don't disturb my master, at present, for he is troubled about a matter in which it is not in your power to do him any good." "You don't know what I may be able to do, Mr Partridge," answered George; "if his concern is about my young lady, I have some news to tell my master." "What do you say, Mr George?" cried Jones. "Hath anything lately happened in which my Sophia is concerned? My Sophia! how dares such a wretch as I mention her so profanely." "I hope she will be yours yet," answered George. "Why yes, sir, I have something to tell you about her. Madam Western hath just brought Madam Sophia home, and there hath been a terrible to do. I could not possibly learn the very right of it; but my master he hath been in a vast big passion, and so was Madam Western, and I heard her say, as she went out of doors into her chair, that she would never set her foot in master's house again. I don't know what's the matter, not I, but everything was very quiet when I came out; but Robin, who waited at supper, said he had never seen the squire for a long while in such good humour with young madam; that he kissed her several times, and swore she should be her own mistress, and he never would think of confining her any more. I thought this news would please you, and so I slipped out, though it was so late, to inform you of it." Mr Jones assured George that it did greatly please him; for though he should never more presume to lift his eyes toward that incomparable creature, nothing could so much relieve his misery as the satisfaction he should always have in hearing of her welfare.

The rest of the conversation which passed at the

visit is not important enough to be here related. The reader will, therefore, forgive us this abrupt breaking off, and be pleased to hear how this great good-will of the squire towards his daughter was brought about.

Mrs Western, on her first arrival at her brother's lodging, began to set forth the great honours and advantages which would accrue to the family by the match with Lord Fellamar, which her niece had absolutely refused; in which refusal, when the squire took the part of his daughter, she fell immediately into the most violent passion, and so irritated and provoked the squire, that neither his patience nor his prudence could bear it any longer; upon which there ensued between them both so warm a bout at altercation, that perhaps the regions of Billingsgate never equalled it. In the heat of this scolding Mrs Western departed, and had consequently no leisure to acquaint her brother with the letter which Sophia received, which might have possibly produced ill effects; but, to say truth, I believe it never once occurred to her memory at this time.

When Mrs Western was gone, Sophia, who had been hitherto silent, as well indeed from necessity as inclination, began to return the compliment which her father had made her, in taking her part against her aunt, by taking his likewise against the lady. This was the first time of her so doing, and it was in the highest degree acceptable to the squire. Again, he remembered that Mr Allworthy had insisted on an entire relinquishment of all violent means; and, indeed, as he made no doubt but that Jones would be hanged, he did not in the least question succeeding with his daughter by fair means; he now, therefore, once more gave a loose to his natural fondness for her, which had such an effect on the dutiful, grateful, tender, and affectionate heart of Sophia, that had her honour, given

to Jones, and something else, perhaps, in which he was concerned, been removed, I much doubt whether she would not have sacrificed herself to a man she did not like, to have obliged her father. She promised him she would make it the whole business of her life to oblige him, and would never marry any man against his consent; which brought the old man so near to his highest happiness, that he was resolved to take the other step, and went to bed completely drunk.

Chapter iij.

Allworthy visits old Nightingale; with a strange discovery that he made on that occasion.

THE morning after these things had happened, Mr Allworthy went, according to his promise, to visit old Nightingale, with whom his authority was so great, that, after having sat with him three hours, he at last prevailed with him to consent to see his son.

Here an accident happened of a very extraordinary kind; one indeed of those strange chances whence very good and grave men have concluded that Providence often interposes in the discovery of the most secret villany, in order to caution men from quitting the paths of honesty, however warily they tread in those of vice.

Mr Allworthy, at his entrance into Mr Nightingale's, saw Black George; he took no notice of him, nor did Black George imagine he had perceived him.

However, when their conversation on the principal point was over, Allworthy asked Nightingale, Whether he knew one George Seagrim, and upon what business he came to his house? "Yes," answered Nightingale, "I know him very well, and a most extraordinary fellow he is, who, in these days, hath been able to

hoard up £500 from renting a very small estate of £30 a year." "And is this the story which he hath told you?" cries Allworthy. "Nay, it is true, I promise you," said Nightingale, "for I have the money now in my own hands, in five bank-bills, which I am to lay out either in a mortgage, or in some purchase in the north of England." The bank-bills were no sooner produced at Allworthy's desire than he blessed himself at the strangeness of the discovery. He presently told Nightingale that these bank-bills were formerly his, and then acquainted him with the whole affair. As there are no men who complain more of the frauds of business than highwaymen, gamesters, and other thieves of that kind, so there are none who so bitterly exclaim against the frauds of gamesters, &c., as usurers, brokers, and other thieves of this kind; whether it be that the one way of cheating is a discountenance or reflection upon the other, or that money, which is the common mistress of all cheats, makes them regard each other in the light of rivals; but Nightingale no sooner heard the story than he exclaimed against the fellow in terms much severer than the justice and honesty of Allworthy had bestowed on him.

Allworthy desired Nightingale to retain both the money and the secret till he should hear farther from him; and, if he should in the meantime see the fellow, that he would not take the least notice to him of the discovery which he had made. He then returned to his lodgings, where he found Mrs Miller in a very dejected condition, on account of the information she had received from her son-in-law. Mr Allworthy, with great chearfulness, told her that he had much good news to communicate; and, with little further preface, acquainted her that he had brought Mr Nightingale to consent to see his son, and did not in the least doubt to effect a perfect reconciliation between them; though he

found the father more sowered by another accident of the same kind which had happened in his family. He then mentioned the running away of the uncle's daughter, which he had been told by the old gentleman, and which Mrs Miller and her son-in-law did not yet know.

The reader may suppose Mrs Miller received this account with great thankfulness, and no less pleasure; but so uncommon was her friendship to Jones, that I am not certain whether the uneasiness she suffered for his sake did not overbalance her satisfaction at hearing a piece of news tending so much to the happiness of her own family; nor whether even this very news, as it reminded her of the obligations she had to Jones, did not hurt as well as please her; when her grateful heart said to her, "While my own family is happy, how miserable is the poor creature to whose generosity we owe the beginning of all this happiness!"

Allworthy, having left her a little while to chew the cud (if I may use that expression) on these first tidings, told her he had still something more to impart, which he believed would give her pleasure. "I think," said he, "I have discovered a pretty considerable treasure belonging to the young gentleman, your friend; but perhaps, indeed, his present situation may be such that it will be of no service to him." The latter part of the speech gave Mrs Miller to understand who was meant, and she answered with a sigh, "I hope not, sir." "I hope so too," cries Allworthy, "with all my heart; but my nephew told me this morning he had heard a very bad account of the affair."—— "Good Heaven! sir," said she—"Well, I must not speak, and yet it is certainly very hard to be obliged to hold one's tongue when one hears."——"Madam," said Allworthy, "you may say whatever you please, you know me too well to think I have a prejudice

against any one; and as for that young man, I assure you I should be heartily pleased to find he could acquit himself of everything, and particularly of this sad affair. You can testify the affection I have formerly borne him. The world, I know, censured me for loving him so much. I did not withdraw that affection from him without thinking I had the justest cause. Believe me, Mrs Miller, I should be glad to find I have been mistaken." Mrs Miller was going eagerly to reply, when a servant acquainted her that a gentleman without desired to speak with her immediately. Allworthy then enquired for his nephew, and was told that he had been for some time in his room with the gentleman who used to come to him, and whom Mr Allworthy guessing rightly to be Mr Dowling, he desired presently to speak with him.

When Dowling attended, Allworthy put the case of the bank-notes to him, without mentioning any name, and asked in what manner such a person might be punished. To which Dowling answered, "He thought he might be indicted on the Black Act; but said, as it was a matter of some nicety, it would be proper to go to counsel. He said he was to attend counsel presently upon an affair of Mr Western's, and if Mr Allworthy pleased he would lay the case before them." This was agreed to; and then Mrs Miller, opening the door, cried, "I ask pardon, I did not know you had company;" but Allworthy desired her to come in, saying he had finished his business. Upon which Mr Dowling withdrew, and Mrs Miller introduced Mr Nightingale the younger, to return thanks for the great kindness done him by Allworthy: but she had scarce patience to let the young gentleman finish his speech before she interrupted him, saying, "O sir! Mr Nightingale brings great news about poor Mr Jones: he hath been to see the wounded gentleman, who is

out of all danger of death, and, what is more, declares he fell upon poor Mr Jones himself, and beat him. I am sure, sir, you would not have Mr Jones be a coward. If I was a man myself, I am sure, if any man was to strike me, I should draw my sword. Do pray, my dear, tell Mr Allworthy, tell him all yourself." Nightingale then confirmed what Mrs Miller had said; and concluded with many handsome things of Jones, who was, he said, one of the best-natured fellows in the world, and not in the least inclined to be quarrelsome. Here Nightingale was going to cease, when Mrs Miller again begged him to relate all the many dutiful expressions he had heard him make use of towards Mr Allworthy. "To say the utmost good of Mr Allworthy," cries Nightingale, "is doing no more than strict justice, and can have no merit in it: but indeed, I must say, no man can be more sensible of the obligations he hath to so good a man than is poor Jones. Indeed, sir, I am convinced the weight of your displeasure is the heaviest burthen he lies under. He hath often lamented it to me, and hath as often protested in the most solemn manner he hath never been intentionally guilty of any offence towards you; nay, he hath sworn he would rather die a thousand deaths than he would have his conscience upbraid him with one disrespectful, ungrateful, or undutiful thought towards you. But I ask pardon, sir, I am afraid I presume to intermeddle too far in so tender a point." "You have spoke no more than what a Christian ought," cries Mrs Miller. "Indeed, Mr Nightingale," answered Allworthy, "I applaud your generous friendship, and I wish he may merit it of you. I confess I am glad to hear the report you bring from this unfortunate gentleman; and, if that matter should turn out to be as you represent it (and, indeed, I doubt nothing of what you say), I may, perhaps, in time, be brought to

think better than lately I have of this young man; for this good gentlewoman here, nay, all who know me, can witness that I loved him as dearly as if he had been my own son. Indeed, I have considered him as a child sent by fortune to my care. I still remember the innocent, the helpless situation in which I found him. I feel the tender pressure of his little hands at this moment. He was my darling, indeed he was." At which words he ceased, and the tears stood in his eyes.

As the answer which Mrs Miller made may lead us into fresh matters, we will here stop to account for the visible alteration in Mr Allworthy's mind, and the abatement of his anger to Jones. Revolutions of this kind, it is true, do frequently occur in histories and dramatic writers, for no other reason than because the history or play draws to a conclusion, and are justified by authority of authors; yet, though we insist upon as much authority as any author whatever, we shall use this power very sparingly, and never but when we are driven to it by necessity, which we do not at present foresee will happen in this work.

This alteration then in the mind of Mr Allworthy was occasioned by a letter he had just received from Mr Square, and which we shall give the reader in the beginning of the next chapter.

Chapter iv.

Containing two letters in very different stiles.

"MY WORTHY FRIEND,—I informed you in my last that I was forbidden the use of the waters, as they were found by experience rather to increase than lessen the symptoms of my distemper. I

Mr. Thwackum the Divine and Mr. Square the Philosopher.

must now acquaint you with a piece of news, which, I believe, will afflict my friends more than it hath afflicted me. Dr Harrington and Dr Brewster have informed me that there is no hopes of my recovery.

"I have somewhere read, that the great use of philosophy is to learn to die. I will not therefore so far disgrace mine as to shew any surprize at receiving a lesson which I must be thought to have so long studied. Yet, to say the truth, one page of the Gospel teaches this lesson better than all the volumes of antient or modern philosophers. The assurance it gives us of another life is a much stronger support to a good mind than all the consolations that are drawn from the necessity of nature, the emptiness or satiety of our enjoyments here, or any other topic of those declamations which are sometimes capable of arming our minds with a stubborn patience in bearing the thoughts of death, but never of raising them to a real contempt of it, and much less of making us think it is a real good. I would not here be understood to throw the horrid censure of atheism, or even the absolute denial of immortality, on all who are called philosophers. Many of that sect, as well antient as modern, have, from the light of reason, discovered some hopes of a future state; but in reality, that light was so faint and glimmering, and the hopes were so incertain and precarious, that it may be justly doubted on which side their belief turned. Plato himself concludes his Phædon with declaring that his best arguments amount only to raise a probability; and Cicero himself seems rather to profess an inclination to believe, than any actual belief in the doctrines of immortality. As to myself, to be very sincere with you, I never was much in earnest in this faith till I was in earnest a Christian.

"You will perhaps wonder at the latter expression; but I assure you it hath not been till very lately that I

could, with truth, call myself so. The pride of philosophy had intoxicated my reason, and the sublimest of all wisdom appeared to me, as it did to the Greeks of old, to be foolishness. God hath, however, been so gracious to shew me my error in time, and to bring me into the way of truth, before I sunk into utter darkness for ever.

"I find myself beginning to grow weak, I shall therefore hasten to the main purpose of this letter.

"When I reflect on the actions of my past life, I know of nothing which sits heavier upon my conscience than the injustice I have been guilty of to that poor wretch your adopted son. I have, indeed, not only connived at the villany of others, but been myself active in injustice towards him. Believe me, my dear friend, when I tell you, on the word of a dying man, he hath been basely injured. As to the principal fact, upon the misrepresentation of which you discarded him, I solemnly assure you he is innocent. When you lay upon your supposed deathbed, he was the only person in the house who testified any real concern; and what happened afterwards arose from the wildness of his joy on your recovery; and, I am sorry to say it, from the baseness of another person (but it is my desire to justify the innocent, and to accuse none). Believe me, my friend, this young man hath the noblest generosity of heart, the most perfect capacity for friendship, the highest integrity, and indeed every virtue which can ennoble a man. He hath some faults, but among them is not to be numbered the least want of duty or gratitude towards you. On the contrary, I am satisfied, when you dismissed him from your house, his heart bled for you more than for himself.

"Worldly motives were the wicked and base reasons of my concealing this from you so long: to reveal it now I can have no inducement but the desire of serving

the cause of truth, of doing right to the innocent, and of making all the amends in my power for a past offence. I hope this declaration, therefore, will have the effect desired, and will restore this deserving young man to your favour; the hearing of which, while I am yet alive, will afford the utmost consolation to,

Sir,

Your most obliged,

obedient humble servant,

THOMAS SQUARE."

The reader will, after this, scarce wonder at the revolution so visibly appearing in Mr Allworthy, notwithstanding he received from Thwackum, by the same post, another letter of a very different kind, which we shall here add, as it may possibly be the last time we shall have occasion to mention the name of that gentleman.

"SIR,

"I am not at all surprized at hearing from your worthy nephew a fresh instance of the villany of Mr Square the atheist's young pupil. I shall not wonder at any murders he may commit; and I heartily pray that your own blood may not seal up his final commitment to the place of wailing and gnashing of teeth.

"Though you cannot want sufficient calls to repentance for the many unwarrantable weaknesses exemplified in your behaviour to this wretch, so much to the prejudice of your own lawful family, and of your character; I say, though these may sufficiently be supposed to prick and goad your conscience at this season, I should yet be wanting to my duty, if I spared to give you some admonition in order to bring you to a due sense of your errors. I therefore pray you seriously to consider the judgment which is likely to

overtake this wicked villain; and let it serve at least as a warning to you, that you may not for the future despise the advice of one who is so indefatigable in his prayers for your welfare.

"Had not my hand been withheld from due correction, I had scourged much of this diabolical spirit out of a boy, of whom from his infancy I discovered the devil had taken such entire possession. But reflections of this kind now come too late.

"I am sorry you have given away the living of Westerton so hastily. I should have applied on that occasion earlier, had I thought you would not have acquainted me previous to the disposition.——Your objection to pluralities is being righteous over-much. If there were any crime in the practice, so many godly men would not agree to it. If the vicar of Aldergrove should die (as we hear he is in a declining way), I hope you will think of me, since I am certain you must be convinced of my most sincere attachment to your highest welfare—a welfare to which all worldly considerations are as trifling as the small tithes mentioned in Scripture are, when compared to the weighty matters of the law.

I am, sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

ROGER THWACKUM."

This was the first time Thwackum ever wrote in this authoritative stile to Allworthy, and of this he had afterwards sufficient reason to repent, as in the case of those who mistake the highest degree of goodness for the lowest degree of weakness. Allworthy had indeed never liked this man. He knew him to be proud and ill-natured; he also knew that his divinity itself was tinctured with his temper, and such as in many respects he himself did by no means

approve; but he was at the same time an excellent scholar, and most indefatigable in teaching the two lads. Add to this, the strict severity of his life and manners, an unimpeached honesty, and a most devout attachment to religion. So that, upon the whole, though Allworthy did not esteem nor love the man, yet he could never bring himself to part with a tutor to the boys, who was, both by learning and industry, extremely well qualified for his office; and he hoped, that as they were bred up in his own house, and under his own eye, he should be able to correct whatever was wrong in Thwackum's instructions.

Chapter v.

In which the history is continued.

MR ALLWORTHY, in his last speech, had recollected some tender ideas concerning Jones, which had brought tears into the good man's eyes. This Mrs Miller observing, said, "Yes, yes, sir, your goodness to this poor young man is known, notwithstanding all your care to conceal it; but there is not a single syllable of truth in what those villains said. Mr Nightingale hath now discovered the whole matter. It seems these fellows were employed by a lord, who is a rival of poor Mr Jones, to have pressed him on board a ship.——I assure them I don't know who they will press next. Mr Nightingale here hath seen the officer himself, who is a very pretty gentleman, and hath told him all, and is very sorry for what he undertook, which he would never have done, had he known Mr Jones to have been a gentleman; but he was told that he was a common strolling vagabond."

Allworthy stared at all this, and declared he was a

stranger to every word she said. "Yes, sir," answered she, "I believe you are.——It is a very different story, I believe, from what those fellows told the lawyer."

"What lawyer, madam? what is it you mean?" said Allworthy. "Nay, nay," said she, "this is so like you to deny your own goodness: but Mr Nightingale here saw him." "Saw whom, madam?" answered he. "Why, your lawyer, sir," said she, "that you so kindly sent to enquire into the affair." "I am still in the dark, upon my honour," said Allworthy. "Why then do you tell him, my dear sir," cries she. "Indeed, sir," said Nightingale, "I did see that very lawyer who went from you when I came into the room, at an alehouse in Aldersgate, in company with two of the fellows who were employed by Lord Fellamar to press Mr Jones, and who were by that means present at the unhappy rencounter between him and Mr Fitzpatrick." "I own, sir," said Mrs Miller, "when I saw this gentleman come into the room to you, I told Mr Nightingale that I apprehended you had sent him thither to inquire into the affair." Allworthy shewed marks of astonishment in his countenance at this news, and was indeed for two or three minutes struck dumb by it. At last, addressing himself to Mr Nightingale, he said, "I must confess myself, sir, more surprized at what you tell me than I have ever been before at anything in my whole life. Are you certain this was the gentleman?" "I am most certain," answered Nightingale. "At Aldersgate?" cries Allworthy. "And was you in company with this lawyer and the two fellows?"—"I was, sir," said the other, "very near half an hour." "Well, sir," said Allworthy, "and in what manner did the lawyer behave? did you hear all that past between him and the fellows?" "No, sir," answered Nightingale, "they

had been together before I came.—In my presence the lawyer said little; but, after I had several times examined the fellows, who persisted in a story directly contrary to what I had heard from Mr Jones, and which I find by Mr Fitzpatrick was a rank falshood, the lawyer then desired the fellows to say nothing but what was the truth, and seemed to speak so much in favour of Mr Jones, that, when I saw the same person with you, I concluded your goodness had prompted you to send him thither."—"And did you not send him thither?" says Mrs Miller.—"Indeed I did not," answered Allworthy; "nor did I know he had gone on such an errand till this moment."—"I see it all!" said Mrs Miller, "upon my soul, I see it all! No wonder they have been closeted so close lately. Son Nightingale, let me beg you run for these fellows immediately——find them out if they are above-ground. I will go myself"——"Dear madam," said Allworthy, "be patient, and do me the favour to send a servant upstairs to call Mr Dowling hither, if he be in the house, or, if not, Mr Blifil." Mrs Miller went out muttering something to herself, and presently returned with an answer, "That Mr Dowling was gone; but that the t'other," as she called him, "was coming."

Allworthy was of a cooler disposition than the good woman, whose spirits were all up in arms in the cause of her friend. He was not however without some suspicions which were near akin to hers. When Blifil came into the room, he asked him with a very serious countenance, and with a less friendly look than he had ever before given him, "Whether he knew anything of Mr Dowling's having seen any of the persons who were present at the duel between Jones and another gentleman?"

There is nothing so dangerous as a question which comes by surprize on a man whose business it is to

conceal truth, or to defend falshood. For which reason those worthy personages, whose noble office it is to save the lives of their fellow-creatures at the Old Bailey, take the utmost care, by frequent previous examination, to divine every question which may be asked their clients on the day of tryal, that they may be supplyed with proper and ready answers, which the most fertile invention cannot supply in an instant. Besides, the sudden and violent impulse on the blood, occasioned by these surprizes, causes frequently such an alteration in the countenance, that the man is obliged to give evidence against himself. And such indeed were the alterations which the countenance of Blifil underwent from this sudden question, that we can scarce blame the eagerness of Mrs Miller, who immediately cryed out, "Guilty, upon my honour! guilty, upon my soul!"

Mr Allworthy sharply rebuked her for this impetuosity; and then turning to Blifil, who seemed sinking into the earth, he said, "Why do you hesitate, sir, at giving me an answer? You certainly must have employed him; for he would not, of his own accord, I believe, have undertaken such an errand, and especially without acquainting me."

Blifil then answered, "I own, sir, I have been guilty of an offence, yet may I hope your pardon?"—— "My pardon," said Allworthy, very angrily.—— "Nay, sir," answered Blifil, "I knew you would be offended; yet surely my dear uncle will forgive the effects of the most amiable of human weaknesses. Compassion for those who do not deserve it, I own is a crime; and yet it is a crime from which you yourself are not entirely free. I know I have been guilty of it in more than one instance to this very person; and I will own I did send Mr Dowling, not on a vain and fruitless enquiry, but to discover the witnesses,

and to endeavour to soften their evidence. This, sir, is the truth; which, though I intended to conceal from you, I will not deny."

"I confess," said Nightingale, "this is the light in which it appeared to me from the gentleman's behaviour."

"Now, madam," said Allworthy, "I believe you will once in your life own you have entertained a wrong suspicion, and are not so angry with my nephew as you was."

Mrs Miller was silent; for, though she could not so hastily be pleased with Blifil, whom she looked upon to have been the ruin of Jones, yet in this particular instance he had imposed upon her as well as upon the rest; so entirely had the devil stood his friend. And, indeed, I look upon the vulgar observation, "That the devil often deserts his friends, and leaves them in the lurch," to be a great abuse on that gentleman's character. Perhaps he may sometimes desert those who are only his cup acquaintance; or who, at most, are but half his; but he generally stands by those who are thoroughly his servants, and helps them off in all extremities, till their bargain expires.

As a conquered rebellion strengthens a government, or as health is more perfectly established by recovery from some diseases; so anger, when removed, often gives new life to affection. This was the case of Mr Allworthy; for Blifil having wiped off the greater suspicion, the lesser, which had been raised by Square's letter, sunk of course, and was forgotten; and Thwackum, with whom he was greatly offended, bore alone all the reflections which Square had cast on the enemies of Jones.

As for that young man, the resentment of Mr Allworthy began more and more to abate towards him. He told Blifil, "He did not only forgive the

extraordinary efforts of his good-nature, but would give him the pleasure of following his example." Then, turning to Mrs Miller with a smile which would have become an angel, he cryed, "What say you, madam? shall we take a hackney-coach, and all of us together pay a visit to your friend? I promise you it is not the first visit I have made in a prison."

Every reader, I believe, will be able to answer for the worthy woman; but they must have a great deal of good-nature, and be well acquainted with friendship, who can feel what she felt on this occasion. Few, I hope, are capable of feeling what now passed in the mind of Blifil; but those who are will acknowledge that it was impossible for him to raise any objection to this visit. Fortune, however, or the gentleman lately mentioned above, stood his friend, and prevented his undergoing so great a shock; for at the very instant when the coach was sent for, Partridge arrived, and, having called Mrs Miller from the company, acquainted her with the dreadful accident lately come to light; and hearing Mr Allworthy's intention, begged her to find some means of stopping him: "For," says he, "the matter must at all hazards be kept a secret from him; and if he should now go, he will find Mr Jones and his mother, who arrived just as I left him, lamenting over one another the horrid crime they have ignorantly committed."

The poor woman, who was almost deprived of her senses at his dreadful news, was never less capable of invention than at present. However, as women are much readier at this than men, she bethought herself of an excuse, and, returning to Allworthy, said, "I am sure, sir, you will be surprized at hearing any objection from me to the kind proposal you just now made; and yet I am afraid of the consequence of it,

if carried immediately into execution. You must imagine, sir, that all the calamities which have lately befallen this poor young fellow must have thrown him into the lowest dejection of spirits; and now, sir, should we all on a sudden fling him into such a violent fit of joy, as I know your presence will occasion, it may, I am afraid, produce some fatal mischief, especially as his servant, who is without, tells me he is very far from being well."

"Is his servant without?" cries Allworthy; "pray call him hither. I will ask him some questions concerning his master."

Partridge was at first afraid to appear before Mr Allworthy; but was at length persuaded, after Mrs Miller, who had often heard his whole story from his own mouth, had promised to introduce him.

Allworthy recollected Partridge the moment he came into the room, though many years had passed since he had seen him. Mrs Miller, therefore, might have spared here a formal oration, in which, indeed, she was something prolix; for the reader, I believe, may have observed already that the good woman, among other things, had a tongue always ready for the service of her friends.

"And are you," said Allworthy to Partridge, "the servant of Mr Jones?" "I can't say, sir," answered he, "that I am regularly a servant, but I live with him, an't please your honour, at present. *Non sum qualis eram*, as your honour very well knows."

Mr Allworthy then asked him many questions concerning Jones, as to his health, and other matters; to all which Partridge answered, without having the least regard to what was, but considered only what he would have things appear; for a strict adherence to truth was not among the articles of this honest fellow's morality or his religion.

During this dialogue Mr Nightingale took his leave, and presently after Mrs Miller left the room, when Allworthy likewise despatched Blifil; for he imagined that Partridge when alone with him would be more explicit than before company. They were no sooner left in private together than Allworthy began, as in the following chapter.

Chapter vi.

In which the history is farther continued.

"SURE, friend," said the good man, "you are the strangest of all human beings. Not only to have suffered as you have formerly for obstinately persisting in a falshood, but to persist in it thus to the last, and to pass thus upon the world for a servant of your own son! What interest can you have in all this? What can be your motive?"

"I see, sir," said Partridge, falling down upon his knees, "that your honour is prepossessed against me, and resolved not to believe anything I say, and, therefore, what signifies my protestations? but yet there is one above who knows that I am not the father of this young man."

"How!" said Allworthy, "will you yet deny what you was formerly convicted of upon such unanswerable, such manifest evidence? Nay, what a confirmation is your being now found with this very man, of all which twenty years ago appeared against you! I thought you had left the country! nay, I thought you had been long since dead.—In what manner did you know anything of this young man? Where did you meet with him, unless you had kept some correspondence together? Do not deny this;

for I promise you it will greatly raise your son in my opinion, to find that he hath such a sense of filial duty as privately to support his father for so many years."

"If your honour will have patience to hear me," said Partridge, "I will tell you all."—Being bid go on, he proceeded thus: "When you honour conceived that displeasure against me, it ended in my ruin soon after; for I lost my little school; and the minister, thinking I suppose it would be agreeable to your honour, turned me out from the office of clerk; so that I had nothing to trust to but the barber's shop, which, in a country place like that, is a poor livelihood; and when my wife died (for till that time I received a pension of £12 a year from an unknown hand, which indeed I believe was your honour's own, for nobody that ever I heard of doth these things besides)—but, as I was saying, when she died, this pension forsook me; so that now, as I owed two or three small debts, which began to be troublesome to me, particularly one * which an attorney brought up by law-charges from 15s. to near £30, and as I found all my usual means of living had forsook me, I packed up my little all as well as I could, and went off.

"The first place I came to was Salisbury, where I got into the service of a gentleman belonging to the law, and one of the best gentlemen that ever I knew, for he was not only good to me, but I know a thousand good and charitable acts which he did while I staid

* This is a fact which I knew happen to a poor clergyman in Dorsetshire, by the villany of an attorney who, not contented with the exorbitant costs to which the poor man was put by a single action, brought afterwards another action on the judgment, as it was called. A method frequently used to oppress the poor, and bring money into the pockets of attorneys, to the great scandal of the law, of the nation, of Christianity, and even of human nature itself.

with him; and I have known him often refuse business because it was paultry and oppressive." "You need not be so particular," said Allworthy; "I know this gentleman, and a very worthy man he is, and an honour to his profession."——"Well, sir," continued Partridge, "from hence I removed to Lymington, where I was above three years in the service of another lawyer, who was likewise a very good sort of a man, and to be sure one of the merriest gentlemen in England. Well, sir, at the end of the three years I set up a little school, and was likely to do well again, had it not been for a most unlucky accident. Here I kept a pig; and one day, as ill fortune would have it, this pig broke out, and did a trespass, I think they call it, in a garden belonging to one of my neighbours, who was a proud, revengeful man, and employed a lawyer, one—one—I can't think of his name; but he sent for a writ against me, and had me to size. When I came there, Lord have mercy upon me—to hear what the counsellors said! There was one that told my lord a parcel of the confoundedest lies about me; he said that I used to drive my hogs into other folk's gardens, and a great deal more; and at last he said, he hoped I had at last brought my hogs to a fair market. To be sure, one would have thought that, instead of being owner only of one poor little pig, I had been the greatest hog-merchant in England. Well—" "Pray," said Allworthy, "do not be so particular, I have heard nothing of your son yet." "O it was a great many years," answered Partridge, "before I saw my son, as you are pleased to call him.—I went over to Ireland after this, and taught school at Cork (for that one suit ruined me again, and I lay seven years in Winchester jail)."——"Well," said Allworthy, "pass that over till your return to England."—"Then, sir," said he, "it was about half a year ago that I landed at Bristol, where I staid some time, and

not finding it do there, and hearing of a place between that and Gloucester where the barber was just dead, I went thither, and there I had been about two months when Mr Jones came thither." He then gave Allworthy a very particular account of their first meeting, and of everything, as well as he could remember, which had happened from that day to this; frequently interlarding his story with panegyrics on Jones, and not forgetting to insinuate the great love and respect which he had for Allworthy. He concluded with saying, "Now, sir, I have told your honour the whole truth." And then repeated a most solemn protestation, "That he was no more the father of Jones than of the Pope of Rome;" and imprecated the most bitter curses on his head, if he did not speak truth.

"What am I to think of this matter?" cries Allworthy. "For what purpose should you so strongly deny a fact which I think it would be rather your interest to own?" "Nay, sir," answered Partridge (for he could hold no longer), "if your honour will not believe me, you are like soon to have satisfaction enough. I wish you had mistaken the mother of this young man, as well as you have his father."—And now being asked what he meant, with all the symptoms of horror, both in his voice and countenance, he told Allworthy the whole story, which he had a little before expressed such desire to Mrs Miller to conceal from him.

Allworthy was almost as much shocked at this discovery as Partridge himself had been while he related it. "Good heavens!" says he, "in what miserable distresses do vice and imprudence involve men! How much beyond our designs are the effects of wickedness sometimes carried!" He had scarce uttered these words, when Mrs Waters came hastily and abruptly into the room. Partridge no sooner saw her than he

cried, "Here, sir, here is the very woman herself. This is the unfortunate mother of Mr Jones. I am sure she will acquit me before your honour. Pray, madam——"

Mrs Waters, without paying any regard to what Partridge said, and almost without taking any notice of him, advanced to Mr Allworthy. "I believe, sir, it is so long since I had the honour of seeing you, that you do not recollect me." "Indeed," answered Allworthy, "you are so very much altered, on many accounts, that had not this man already acquainted me who you are, I should not have immediately called you to my remembrance. Have you, madam, any particular business which brings you to me?" Allworthy spoke this with great reserve; for the reader may easily believe he was not well pleased with the conduct of this lady; neither with what he had formerly heard, nor with what Partridge had now delivered.

Mrs Waters answered—"Indeed, sir, I have very particular business with you; and it is such as I can impart only to yourself. I must desire, therefore, the favour of a word with you alone: for I assure you what I have to tell you is of the utmost importance."

Partridge was then ordered to withdraw, but before he went, he begged the lady to satisfy Mr Allworthy that he was perfectly innocent. To which she answered, "You need be under no apprehension, sir; I shall satisfy Mr Allworthy very perfectly of that matter."

Then Partridge withdrew, and that past between Mr Allworthy and Mrs Waters which is written in the next chapter.

Chapter viij.

Continuation of the history.

MRS WATERS remaining a few moments silent, Mr Allworthy could not refrain from saying, "I am sorry, madam, to perceive, by what I have since heard, that you have made so very ill a use——" "Mr Allworthy," says she, interrupting him, "I know I have faults, but ingratitude to you is not one of them. I never can nor shall forget your goodness, which I own I have very little deserved; but be pleased to wave all upbraiding me at present, as I have so important an affair to communicate to you concerning this young man, to whom you have given my maiden name of Jones."

"Have I then," said Allworthy, "ignorantly punished an innocent man, in the person of him who hath just left us? Was he not the father of the child?" "Indeed he was not," said Mrs Waters. "You may be pleased to remember, sir, I formerly told you, you should one day know; and I acknowledge myself to have been guilty of a cruel neglect, in not having discovered it to you before. Indeed, I little knew how necessary it was." "Well, madam," said Allworthy, "be pleased to proceed." "You must remember, sir," said she, "a young fellow, whose name was Summer." "Very well," cries Allworthy, "he was the son of a clergyman of great learning and virtue, for whom I had the highest friendship." "So it appeared, sir," answered she; "for I believe you bred the young man up, and maintained him at the university; where, I think, he had finished his studies, when he came to reside at your house; a finer man, I must say, the sun never shone

upon; for, besides the handsomest person I ever saw, he was so genteel, and had so much wit and good breeding." "Poor gentleman," said Allworthy, "he was indeed untimely snatched away; and little did I think he had any sins of this kind to answer for; for I plainly perceive you are going to tell me he was the father of your child."

"Indeed, sir," answered she, "he was not." "How!" said Allworthy, "to what then tends all this preface?" "To a story," said she, "which I am concerned falls to my lot to unfold to you. O, sir! prepare to hear something which will surprize you, will grieve you." "Speak," said Allworthy, "I am conscious of no crime, and cannot be afraid to hear." "Sir," said she, "that Mr Summer, the son of your friend, educated at your expense, who, after living a year in the house as if he had been your own son, died there of the small-pox, was tenderly lamented by you, and buried as if he had been your own; that Summer, sir, was the father of this child." "How!" said Allworthy; "you contradict yourself." "That I do not," answered she; "he was indeed the father of this child, but not by me." "Take care, madam," said Allworthy, "do not, to shun the imputation of any crime, be guilty of falshood. Remember there is One from whom you can conceal nothing, and before whose tribunal falshood will only aggravate your guilt." "Indeed, sir," says she, "I am not his mother; nor would I now think myself so for the world." "I know your reason," said Allworthy, "and shall rejoice as much as you to find it otherwise; yet you must remember, you yourself confest it before me." "So far what I confest," said she, "was true, that these hands conveyed the infant to your bed; conveyed it thither at the command of its mother; at her commands I afterwards owned it,

and thought myself, by her generosity, nobly rewarded, both for my secrecy and my shame." "Who could this woman be?" said Allworthy. "Indeed, I tremble to name her," answered Mrs Waters. "By all this preparation I am to guess that she was a relation of mine," cried he. "Indeed she was a near one." At which words Allworthy started, and she continued—"You had a sister, sir." "A sister!" repeated he, looking aghast.—"As there is truth in heaven," cries she, "your sister was the mother of that child you found between your sheets." "Can it be possible?" cries he, "Good heavens!" "Have patience, sir," said Mrs Waters, "and I will unfold to you the whole story. Just after your departure for London, Miss Bridget came one day to the house of my mother. She was pleased to say she had heard an extraordinary character of me, for my learning and superior understanding to all the young women there, so she was pleased to say. She then bid me come to her to the great house; where, when I attended, she employed me to read to her. She expressed great satisfaction in my reading, shewed great kindness to me, and made me many presents. At last she began to catechise me on the subject of secrecy, to which I gave her such satisfactory answers, that, at last, having locked the door of her room, she took me into her closet, and then locking that door likewise, she said she should convince me of the vast reliance she had on my integrity, by communicating a secret in which her honour, and consequently her life, was concerned. She then stopt, and after a silence of a few minutes, during which she often wiped her eyes, she enquired of me if I thought my mother might safely be confided in. I answered, I would stake my life on her fidelity. She then imparted to me the great secret which laboured in her breast, and which, I believe, was delivered with more

pains than she afterwards suffered in child-birth. It was then contrived that my mother and myself only should attend at the time, and that Mrs Wilkins should be sent out of the way, as she accordingly was, to the very furthest part of Dorsetshire, to enquire the character of a servant; for the lady had turned away her own maid near three months before; during all which time I officiated about her person upon trial, as she said, though, as she afterwards declared, I was not sufficiently handy for the place. This, and many other such things which she used to say of me, were all thrown out to prevent any suspicion which Wilkins might hereafter have, when I was to own the child; for she thought it could never be believed she would venture to hurt a young woman with whom she had intrusted such a secret. You may be assured, sir, I was well paid for all these affronts, which, together with being informed with the occasion of them, very well contented me. Indeed, the lady had a greater suspicion of Mrs Wilkins than of any other person; not that she had the least aversion to the gentlewoman, but she thought her incapable of keeping a secret, especially from you, sir; for I have often heard Miss Bridget say, that, if Mrs Wilkins had committed a murder, she believed she would acquaint you with it. At last the expected day came, and Mrs Wilkins, who had been kept a week in readiness, and put off from time to time, upon some pretence or other, that she might not return too soon, was dispatched. Then the child was born, in the presence only of myself and my mother, and was by my mother conveyed to her own house, where it was privately kept by her till the evening of your return, when I, by the command of Miss Bridget, conveyed it into the bed where you found it. And all suspicions were afterwards laid asleep by the artful conduct of your sister, in pretending ill-will to

the boy, and that any regard she shewed him was out of meer complacence to you."

Mrs Waters then made many protestations of the truth of this story, and concluded by saying, "Thus, sir, you have at last discovered your nephew; for so I am sure you will hereafter think him, and I question not but he will be both an honour and a comfort to you under that appellation."

"I need not, madam," said Allworthy, "express my astonishment at what you have told me; and yet surely you would not, and could not, have put together so many circumstances to evidence an untruth. I confess I recollect some passages relating to that Summer, which formerly gave me a conceit that my sister had some liking to him. I mentioned it to her; for I had such a regard to the young man, as well on his own account as on his father's, that I should willingly have consented to a match between them; but she exprest the highest disdain of my unkind suspicion, as she called it; so that I never spoke more on the subject. Good heavens! Well! the Lord disposeth all things. ——Yet sure it was a most unjustifiable conduct in my sister to carry this secret with her out of the world." "I promise you, sir," said Mrs Waters, "she always profest a contrary intention, and frequently told me she intended one day to communicate it to you. She said, indeed, she was highly rejoiced that her plot had succeeded so well, and that you had of your own accord taken such a fancy to the child, that it was yet unnecessary to make any express declaration. Oh! sir, had that lady lived to have seen this poor young man turned like a vagabond from your house: nay, sir, could she have lived to hear that you had yourself employed a lawyer to prosecute him for a murder of which he was not guilty——Forgive me, Mr Allworthy, I must say it was unkind.—Indeed, you have

been abused, he never deserved it of you." "Indeed, madam," said Allworthy, "I have been abused by the person, whoever he was, that told you so." "Nay, sir," said she, "I would not be mistaken, I did not presume to say you were guilty of any wrong. The gentleman who came to me proposed no such matter; he only said, taking me for Mr Fitzpatrick's wife, that, if Mr Jones had murdered my husband, I should be assisted with any money I wanted to carry on the prosecution, by a very worthy gentleman, who, he said, was well apprized what a villain I had to deal with. It was by this man I found out who Mr Jones was; and this man, whose name is Dowling, Mr Jones tells me is your steward. I discovered his name by a very odd accident; for he himself refused to tell it me; but Partridge, who met him at my lodgings the second time he came, knew him formerly at Salisbury."

"And did this Mr Dowling," says Allworthy, with great astonishment in his countenance, "tell you that I would assist in the prosecution?"——"No, sir," answered she, "I will not charge him wrongfully. He said I should be assisted, but he mentioned no name. Yet you must pardon me, sir, if from circumstances I thought it could be no other."——"Indeed, madam," says Allworthy, "from circumstances I am too well convinced it was another. Good Heaven! by what wonderful means is the blackest and deepest villany sometimes discovered!—Shall I beg you, madam, to stay till the person you have mentioned comes, for I expect him every minute? nay, he may be, perhaps, already in the house."

Allworthy then stept to the door, in order to call a servant, when in came, not Mr Dowling, but the gentleman who will be seen in the next chapter.

Chapter viii.

Further continuation.

THE gentleman who now arrived was no other than Mr Western. He no sooner saw Allworthy, than, without considering in the least the presence of Mrs Waters, he began to vociferate in the following manner: "Fine doings at my house! A rare kettle of fish I have discovered at last! who the devil would be plagued with a daughter?" "What's the matter, neighbour?" said Allworthy. "Matter enough," answered Western: "when I thought she was just a coming to; nay, when she had in a manner promised me to do as I would ha her, and when I was a hoped to have had nothing more to do than to have sent for the lawyer, and finished all; what do you think I have found out? that the little b— hath bin playing tricks with me all the while, and carrying on a correspondence with that bastard of yours. Sister Western, whom I have quarrelled with upon her account, sent me word o't, and I ordered her pockets to be searched when she was asleep, and here I have got un signed with the son of a whore's own name. I have not had patience to read half o't, for 'tis longer than one of parson Supple's sermons; but I find plainly it is all about love; and indeed what should it be else? I have packed her up in chamber again, and to-morrow morning down she goes into the country, unless she consents to be married directly, and there she shall live in a garret upon bread and water all her days; and the sooner such a b— breaks her heart the better, though, d—n her, that I believe is too tough. She will live long enough to plague me." "Mr Western," answered Allworthy, "you know I have always protested against force, and you yourself consented that none should be

used." "Ay," cries he, "that was only upon condition that she would consent without. What the devil and doctor Faustus! shan't I do what I will with my own daughter, especially when I desire nothing but her own good?" "Well, neighbour," answered Allworthy, "if you will give me leave, I will undertake once to argue with the young lady." "Will you?" said Western; "why that is kind now, and neighbourly, and mayhap you will do more than I have been able to do with her; for I promise you she hath a very good opinion of you." "Well, sir," said Allworthy, "if you will go home, and release the young lady from her captivity, I will wait upon her within this half-hour." "But suppose," said Western, "she should run away with un in the meantime? For lawyer Dowling tells me there is no hopes of hanging the fellow at last; for that the man is alive, and like to do well, and that he thinks Jones will be out of prison again presently." "How!" said Allworthy; "what, did you employ him then to enquire or to do anything in that matter?" "Not I," answered Western, "he mentioned it to me just now of his own accord." "Just now!" cries Allworthy, "why, where did you see him then? I want much to see Mr Dowling." "Why, you may see un an you will presently at my lodgings; for there is to be a meeting of lawyers there this morning about a mortgage. 'Icod! I shall lose two or dree thousand pounds, I believe, by that honest gentleman, Mr Nightingale." "Well, sir," said Allworthy, "I will be with you within the half-hour." "And do for once," cries the squire, "take a fool's advice; never think of dealing with her by gentle methods, take my word for it those will never do. I have tried 'um long enough. She must be frightened into it, there is no other way. Tell her I'm her father; and of the horrid sin of disobedience,

and of the dreadful punishment of it in t'other world, and then tell her about being locked up all her life in a garret in this, and being kept only on bread and water." "I will do all I can," said Allworthy; "for I promise you there is nothing I wish for more than an alliance with this amiable creature." "Nay, the girl is well enough for matter o'that," cries the squire; "a man may go farther and meet with worse meat; that I may declare o'her, thof she be my own daughter. And if she will but be obedient to me, there is narrow a father within a hundred miles o' the place, that loves a daughter better than I do; but I see you are busy with the lady here, so I will go huome and expect you; and so your humble servant."

As soon as Mr Western was gone Mrs Waters said, "I see, sir, the squire hath not the least remembrance of my face. I believe, Mr Allworthy, you would not have known me neither. I am very considerably altered since that day when you so kindly gave me that advice, which I had been happy had I followed." "Indeed, madam," cries Allworthy, "it gave me great concern when I first heard the contrary." "Indeed, sir," says she, "I was ruined by a very deep scheme of villany, which if you knew, though I pretend not to think it would justify me in your opinion, it would at least mitigate my offence, and induce you to pity me: you are not now at leisure to hear my whole story; but this I assure you, I was betrayed by the most solemn promises of marriage; nay, in the eye of heaven I was married to him; for, after much reading on the subject, I am convinced that particular ceremonies are only requisite to give a legal sanction to marriage, and have only a worldly use in giving a woman the privileges of a wife; but that she who lives constant to one man, after a solemn private affiance, whatever the world may call her, hath

little to charge on her own conscience." "I am sorry, madam," said Allworthy, "you made so ill a use of your learning. Indeed, it would have been well that you had been possessed of much more, or had remained in a state of ignorance. And yet, madam, I am afraid you have more than this sin to answer for." "During his life," answered she, "which was above a dozen years, I most solemnly assure you I had not. And consider, sir, on my behalf, what is in the power of a woman stript of her reputation and left destitute; whether the good-natured world will suffer such a stray sheep to return to the road of virtue, even if she was never so desirous. I protest, then, I would have chose it had it been in my power; but necessity drove me into the arms of Captain Waters, with whom, though still unmarried, I lived as a wife for many years, and went by his name. I parted with this gentleman at Worcester, on his march against the rebels, and it was then I accidentally met with Mr Jones, who rescued me from the hands of a villain. Indeed, he is the worthiest of men. No young gentleman of his age is, I believe, freer from vice, and few have the twentieth part of his virtues; nay, whatever vices he hath had, I am firmly persuaded he hath now taken a resolution to abandon them." "I hope he hath," cries Allworthy, "and I hope he will preserve that resolution. I must say, I have still the same hopes with regard to yourself. The world, I do agree, are apt to be too unmerciful on these occasions; yet time and perseverance will get the better of this their disinclination, as I may call it, to pity; for though they are not, like heaven, ready to receive a penitent sinner; yet a continued repentance will at length obtain mercy even with the world. This you may be assured of, Mrs Waters, that whenever I find you are sincere in such good intentions, you

shall want no assistance in my power to make them effectual."

Mrs Waters fell now upon her knees before him, and, in a flood of tears, made him many most passionate acknowledgments of his goodness, which, as she truly said, savoured more of the divine than human nature.

Allworthy raised her up, and spoke in the most tender manner, making use of every expression which his invention could suggest to comfort her, when he was interrupted by the arrival of Mr Dowling, who, upon his first entrance, seeing Mrs Waters, started, and appeared in some confusion; from which he soon recovered himself as well as he could, and then said he was in the utmost haste to attend counsel at Mr Western's lodgings; but, however, thought it his duty to call and acquaint him with the opinion of counsel upon the case which he had before told him, which was that the conversion of the moneys in that case could not be questioned in a criminal cause, but that an action of trover might be brought, and if it appeared to the jury to be the moneys of plaintiff, that plaintiff would recover a verdict for the value.

Allworthy, without making any answer to this, bolted the door, and then, advancing with a stern look to Dowling, he said, "Whatever be your haste, sir, I must first receive an answer to some questions. Do you know this lady?"——"That lady, sir!" answered Dowling, with great hesitation. Allworthy then, with the most solemn voice, said, "Look you, Mr Dowling, as you value my favour, or your continuance a moment longer in my service, do not hesitate nor prevaricate; but answer faithfully and truly to every question I ask.——Do you know this lady?"——"Yes, sir," said Dowling, "I have seen the lady." "Where, sir?" "At her own lodgings."

—"Upon what business did you go thither, sir; and who sent you?" "I went, sir, to enquire, sir, about Mr Jones." "And who sent you to enquire about him?" "Who, sir? why, sir, Mr Blifil sent me." "And what did you say to the lady concerning that matter?" "Nay, sir, it is impossible to recollect every word." "Will you please, madam, to assist the gentleman's memory?" "He told me, sir," said Mrs Waters, "that if Mr Jones had murdered my husband, I should be assisted by any money I wanted to carry on the prosecution, by a very worthy gentleman, who was well apprized what a villain I had to deal with. These, I can safely swear, were the very words he spoke."—"Were these the words, sir?" said Allworthy. "I cannot charge my memory exactly," cries Dowling, "but I believe I did speak to that purpose."—"And did Mr Blifil order you to say so?" "I am sure, sir, I should not have gone on my own accord, nor have willingly exceeded my authority in matters of this kind. If I said so, I must have so understood Mr Blifil's instructions." "Look you, Mr Dowling," said Allworthy; "I promise you before this lady, that whatever you have done in this affair by Mr Blifil's order I will forgive, provided you now tell me strictly the truth; for I believe what you say, that you would not have acted of your own accord and without authority in this matter.——Mr Blifil then likewise sent you to examine the two fellows at Aldersgate?"—"He did, sir." "Well, and what instructions did he then give you? Recollect as well as you can, and tell me, as near as possible, the very words he used."——"Why, sir, Mr Blifil sent me to find out the persons who were eye-witnesses of this fight. He said, he feared they might be tampered with by Mr Jones, or some of his friends. He said, blood required blood; and that not only all who concealed a

murderer, but those who omitted anything in their power to bring him to justice, were sharers in his guilt. He said, he found you was very desirous of having the villain brought to justice, though it was not proper you should appear in it." "He did so?" says Allworthy.—"Yes, sir," cries Dowling; "I should not, I am sure, have proceeded such lengths for the sake of any other person living but your worship."—"What lengths, sir?" said Allworthy.—"Nay, sir," cries Dowling, "I would not have your worship think I would, on any account, be guilty of subornation of perjury; but there are two ways of delivering evidence. I told them, therefore, that if any offers should be made them on the other side, they should refuse them, and that they might be assured they should lose nothing by being honest men, and telling the truth. I said, we were told that Mr Jones had assaulted the gentleman first, and that, if that was the truth, they should declare it; and I did give them some hints that they should be no losers."—"I think you went lengths indeed," cries Allworthy.——"Nay, sir," answered Dowling, "I am sure I did not desire them to tell an untruth;——nor should I have said what I did, unless it had been to oblige you."——"You would not have thought, I believe," says Allworthy, "to have obliged me, had you known that this Mr Jones was my own nephew."——"I am sure, sir," answered he, "it did not become me to take any notice of what I thought you desired to conceal."—"How!" cries Allworthy, "and did you know it then?"—"Nay, sir," answered Dowling, "if your worship bids me speak the truth, I am sure I shall do it.—Indeed, sir, I did know it; for they were almost the last words which Madam Blifil ever spoke, which she mentioned to me as I stood alone by her bedside, when she delivered me the letter I brought your worship from her."—"What letter?"

cries Allworthy.—"The letter, sir," answered Dowling, "which I brought from Salisbury, and which I delivered into the hands of Mr Blifil."——"O heavens!" cries Allworthy: "Well, and what were the words? What did my sister say to you?"—"She took me by the hand," answered he, "and, as she delivered me the letter, said, 'I scarce know what I have written. Tell my brother, Mr Jones is his nephew—He is my son.—Bless him,' says she, and then fell backward, as if dying away. I presently called in the people, and she never spoke more to me, and died within a few minutes afterwards."—Allworthy stood a minute silent, lifting up his eyes; and then, turning to Dowling, said, "How came you, sir, not to deliver me this message?" "Your worship," answered he, "must remember that you was at that time ill in bed; and, being in a violent hurry, as indeed I always am, I delivered the letter and message to Mr Blifil, who told me he would carry them both to you, which he hath since told me he did, and that your worship, partly out of friendship to Mr Jones, and partly out of regard to your sister, would never have it mentioned, and did intend to conceal it from the world; and therefore, sir, if you had not mentioned it to me first, I am certain I should never have thought it belonged to me to say anything of the matter, either to your worship or any other person."

We have remarked somewhere already, that it is possible for a man to convey a lie in the words of truth; this was the case at present; for Blifil had, in fact, told Dowling what he now related, but had not imposed upon him, nor indeed had imagined he was able so to do. In reality, the promises which Blifil had made to Dowling were the motives which had induced him to secrecy; and, as he now very plainly saw Blifil would not be able to keep them, he thought

proper now to make this confession, which the promises of forgiveness, joined to the threats, the voice, the looks of Allworthy, and the discoveries he had made before, extorted from him, who was besides taken unawares, and had no time to consider of evasions.

Allworthy appeared well satisfied with this relation, and, having enjoined on Dowling strict silence as to what had past, conducted that gentleman himself to the door, lest he should see Blifil, who was returned to his chamber, where he exulted in the thoughts of his last deceit on his uncle, and little suspected what had since passed below-stairs.

As Allworthy was returning to his room he met Mrs Miller in the entry, who, with a face all pale and full of terror, said to him, "O! sir, I find this wicked woman hath been with you, and you know all; yet do not on this account abandon the poor young man. Consider, sir, he was ignorant it was his own mother; and the discovery itself will most probably break his heart, without your unkindness."

"Madam," says Allworthy, "I am under such an astonishment at what I have heard, that I am really unable to satisfy you; but come with me into my room. Indeed, Mrs Miller, I have made surprizing discoveries, and you shall soon know them."

The poor woman followed him trembling; and now Allworthy, going up to Mrs Waters, took her by the hand, and then, turning to Mrs Miller, said, "What reward shall I bestow upon this gentlewoman, for the services she hath done me?—O! Mrs Miller, you have a thousand times heard me call the young man to whom you are so faithful a friend, my son. Little did I then think he was indeed related to me at all.—Your friend, madam, is my nephew; he is the brother of that wicked viper which I have so long nourished in my bosom.—She will herself tell you the whole story,

and how the youth came to pass for her son. Indeed, Mrs Miller, I am convinced that he hath been wronged, and that I have been abused; abused by one whom you too justly suspected of being a villain. He is, in truth, the worst of villains."

The joy which Mrs Miller now felt bereft her of the power of speech, and might perhaps have deprived her of her senses, if not of life, had not a friendly shower of tears come seasonably to her relief. At length, recovering so far from her transport as to be able to speak, she cried, "And is my dear Mr Jones then your nephew, sir, and not the son of this lady? And are your eyes opened to him at last? And shall I live to see him as happy as he deserves?" "He certainly is my nephew," says Allworthy, "and I hope all the rest."—"And is this the dear good woman, the person," cries she, "to whom all this discovery is owing?"—"She is indeed," says Allworthy.—"Why, then," cried Mrs Miller, upon her knees, "may Heaven shower down its choicest blessings upon her head, and for this one good action forgive her all her sins, be they never so many!"

Mrs Waters then informed them that she believed Jones would very shortly be released; for that the surgeon was gone, in company with a nobleman, to the justice who committed him, in order to certify that Mr Fitzpatrick was out of all manner of danger, and to procure his prisoner his liberty.

Allworthy said he should be glad to find his nephew there at his return home; but that he was then obliged to go on some business of consequence. He then called to a servant to fetch him a chair, and presently left the two ladies together.

Mr Blifil, hearing the chair ordered, came down-stairs to attend upon his uncle; for he never was deficient in such acts of duty. He asked his uncle

if he was going out, which is a civil way of asking a man whither he is going: to which the other making no answer, he again desired to know when he would be pleased to return?—Allworthy made no answer to this neither, till he was just going into his chair, and then, turning about, he said—"Harkee, sir, do you find out, before my return, the letter which your mother sent me on her death-bed." Allworthy then departed, and left Blifil in a situation to be envied only by a man who is just going to be hanged.

Chapter ix.

A further continuation.

ALLWORTHY took an opportunity, whilst he was in the chair, of reading the letter from Jones to Sophia, which Western delivered him; and there were some expressions in it concerning himself which drew tears from his eyes. At length he arrived at Mr Western's, and was introduced to Sophia.

When the first ceremonies were past, and the gentleman and lady had taken their chairs, a silence of some minutes ensued; during which the latter, who had been prepared for the visit by her father, sat playing with her fan, and had every mark of confusion both in her countenance and behaviour. At length Allworthy, who was himself a little disconcerted, began thus: "I am afraid, Miss Western, my family hath been the occasion of giving you some uneasiness; to which, I fear, I have innocently become more instrumental than I intended. Be assured, madam, had I at first known how disagreeable the proposals had been, I should not have suffered you to have been so long persecuted. I hope, therefore, you will not think the design of this

visit is to trouble you with any further solicitations of that kind, but entirely to relieve you from them."

"Sir," said Sophia, with a little modest hesitation, "this behaviour is most kind and generous, and such as I could expect only from Mr Allworthy; but as you have been so kind to mention this matter, you will pardon me for saying it hath, indeed, given me great uneasiness, and hath been the occasion of my suffering much cruel treatment from a father who was, till that unhappy affair, the tenderest and fondest of all parents. I am convinced, sir, you are too good and generous to resent my refusal of your nephew. Our inclinations are not in our own power; and whatever may be his merit, I cannot force them in his favour." "I assure you, most amiable young lady," said Allworthy, "I am capable of no such resentment, had the person been my own son, and had I entertained the highest esteem for him. For you say truly, madam, we cannot force our inclinations, much less can they be directed by another." "Oh! sir," answered Sophia, "every word you speak proves you deserve that good, that great, that benevolent character the whole world allows you. I assure you, sir, nothing less than the certain prospect of future misery could have made me resist the commands of my father." "I sincerely believe you, madam," replied Allworthy, "and I heartily congratulate you on your prudent foresight, since by so justifiable a resistance you have avoided misery indeed!" "You speak now, Mr Allworthy," cries she, "with a delicacy which few men are capable of feeling! but surely, in my opinion, to lead our lives with one to whom we are indifferent must be a state of wretchedness.—Perhaps that wretchedness would be even increased by a sense of the merits of an object to whom we cannot give our affections. If I had married Mr Blifil——" "Pardon my interrupting you, madam,"

answered Allworthy, "but I cannot bear the supposition.—Believe me, Miss Western, I rejoice from my heart, I rejoice in your escape.——I have discovered the wretch for whom you have suffered all this cruel violence from your father to be a villain." "How, sir!" cries Sophia—"you must believe this surprizes me."——"It hath surprized me, madam," answered Allworthy, "and so it will the world.—But I have acquainted you with the real truth." "Nothing but truth," says Sophia, "can, I am convinced, come from the lips of Mr Allworthy.——Yet, sir, such sudden, such unexpected news.——Discovered, you say——may villany be ever so!"——"You will soon enough hear the story," cries Allworthy;—"at present let us not mention so detested a name.—I have another matter of a very serious nature to propose.—O! Miss Western, I know your vast worth, nor can I so easily part with the ambition of being allied to it.—I have a near relation, madam, a young man whose character is, I am convinced, the very opposite to that of this wretch, and whose fortune I will make equal to what his was to have been. Could I, madam, hope you would admit a visit from him?" Sophia, after a minute's silence, answered, "I will deal with the utmost sincerity with Mr Allworthy. His character, and the obligation I have just received from him, demand it. I have determined at present to listen to no such proposals from any person. My only desire is to be restored to the affection of my father, and to be again the mistress of his family. This, sir, I hope to owe to your good offices. Let me beseech you, let me conjure you, by all the goodness which I, and all who know you, have experienced, do not, the very moment when you have released me from one persecution, do not engage me in another as miserable and as fruitless." "Indeed, Miss Western," replied Allworthy, "I am capable of no

such conduct; and if this be your resolution, he must submit to the disappointment, whatever torments he may suffer under it." "I must smile now, Mr Allworthy," answered Sophia, "when you mention the torments of a man whom I do not know, and who can consequently have so little acquaintance with me." "Pardon me, dear young lady," cries Allworthy, "I begin now to be afraid he hath had too much acquaintance for the repose of his future days; since, if ever man was capable of a sincere, violent, and noble passion, such, I am convinced, is my unhappy nephew's for Miss Western." "A nephew of your's, Mr Allworthy!" answered Sophia. "It is surely strange. I never heard of him before." "Indeed, madam," cries Allworthy, "it is only the circumstance of his being my nephew to which you are a stranger, and which, till this day, was a secret to me.—Mr Jones, who has long loved you, he! he is my nephew!" "Mr Jones your nephew, sir!" cries Sophia, "can it be possible?"—"He is, indeed, madam," answered Allworthy; "he is my own sister's son—as such I shall always own him; nor am I ashamed of owning him. I am much more ashamed of my past behaviour to him; but I was as ignorant of his merit as of his birth. Indeed, Miss Western, I have used him cruelly——Indeed I have."——Here the good man wiped his eyes, and after a short pause proceeded —"I never shall be able to reward him for his sufferings without your assistance.——Believe me, most amiable young lady, I must have a great esteem of that offering which I make to your worth. I know he hath been guilty of faults; but there is great goodness of heart at the bottom. Believe me, madam, there is." Here he stopped, seeming to expect an answer, which he presently received from Sophia, after she had a little recovered herself from the hurry of spirits

into which so strange and sudden information had thrown her: "I sincerely wish you joy, sir, of a discovery in which you seem to have such satisfaction. I doubt not but you will have all the comfort you can promise yourself from it. The young gentleman hath certainly a thousand good qualities, which makes it impossible he should not behave well to such an uncle."—"I hope, madam," said Allworthy, "he hath those good qualities which must make him a good husband.—He must, I am sure, be of all men the most abandoned, if a lady of your merit should condescend——" "You must pardon me, Mr Allworthy," answered Sophia; "I cannot listen to a proposal of this kind. Mr Jones, I am convinced, hath much merit; but I shall never receive Mr Jones as one who is to be my husband—Upon my honour I never will."—"Pardon me, madam," cries Allworthy, "if I am a little surprized, after what I have heard from Mr Western——I hope the unhappy young man hath done nothing to forfeit your good opinion, if he had ever the honour to enjoy it.—Perhaps, he may have been misrepresented to you, as he was to me. The same villany may have injured him everywhere.—He is no murderer, I assure you; as he hath been called."—"Mr Allworthy," answered Sophia, "I have told you my resolution. I wonder not at what my father hath told you; but, whatever his apprehensions or fears have been, if I know my heart, I have given no occasion for them; since it hath always been a fixed principle with me, never to have married without his consent. This is, I think, the duty of a child to a parent; and this, I hope, nothing could ever have prevailed with me to swerve from. I do not indeed conceive that the authority of any parent can oblige us to marry in direct opposition to our inclinations. To avoid a force of this kind,

in her?" cries the squire. "'Sblood! what confidence can I place in her, when she won't do as I would ha' her? Let her gi' but her consent to marry as I would ha' her, and I'll place as much confidence in her as wouldst ha' me."——"You have no right, neighbour," answered Allworthy, "to insist on any such consent. A negative voice your daughter allows you, and God and nature have thought proper to allow you no more."—"A negative voice!" cries the squire, "Ay! ay! I'll show you what a negative voice I ha.—Go along, go into your chamber, go, you stubborn——." "Indeed, Mr Western," said Allworthy, "indeed you use her cruelly—I cannot bear to see this—you shall, you must behave to her in a kinder manner. She deserves the best of treatment." "Yes, yes," said the squire, "I know what she deserves: now she's gone, I'll shew you what she deserves. See here, sir, here is a letter from my cousin, my Lady Bellaston, in which she is so kind to gi' me to understand that the fellow is got out of prison again; and here she advises me to take all the care I can o' the wench. Odzookers! neighbour Allworthy, you don't know what it is to govern a daughter."

The squire ended his speech with some compliments to his own sagacity; and then Allworthy, after a formal preface, acquainted him with the whole discovery which he had made concerning Jones, with his anger to Blifil, and with every particular which hath been disclosed to the reader in the preceding chapters.

Men over-violent in their dispositions are, for the most part, as changeable in them. No sooner then was Western informed of Mr Allworthy's intention to make Jones his heir, than he joined heartily with the uncle in every commendation of the nephew, and became as eager for her marriage with Jones as he had before been to couple her to Blifil.

Here Mr Allworthy was again forced to interpose, and to relate what had passed between him and Sophia, at which he testified great surprize.

The squire was silent a moment, and looked wild with astonishment at this account.—At last he cried out, "Why, what can be the meaning of this, neighbour Allworthy? Vond o' un she was, that I'll be sworn to.——Odzookers! I have hit o't. As sure as a gun I have hit o' the very right o't. It's all along o' zister. The girl hath got a hankering after this son of a whore of a lord. I vound 'em together at my cousin my Lady Bellaston's. He hath turned the head o' her, that's certain—but d—n me if he shall ha her—I'll ha no lords nor courtiers in my vamily."

Allworthy now made a long speech, in which he repeated his resolution to avoid all violent measures, and very earnestly recommended gentle methods to Mr Western, as those by which he might be assured of succeeding best with his daughter. He then took his leave, and returned back to Mrs Miller, but was forced to comply with the earnest entreaties of the squire, in promising to bring Mr Jones to visit him that afternoon, that he might, as he said, "make all matters up with the young gentleman." At Mr Allworthy's departure, Western promised to follow his advice in his behaviour to Sophia, saying, "I don't know how 'tis, but d—n me, Allworthy, if you don't make me always do just as you please; and yet I have as good an esteate as you, and am in the commission of the peace as well as yourself."

Chapter v.

Wherein the history begins to draw towards a conclusion.

WHEN Allworthy returned to his lodgings, he heard Mr Jones was just arrived before him. He hurried therefore instantly into an empty chamber, whither he ordered Mr Jones to be brought to him alone.

It is impossible to conceive a more tender or moving scene than the meeting between the uncle and nephew (for Mrs Waters, as the reader may well suppose, had at her last visit discovered to him the secret of his birth). The first agonies of joy which were felt on both sides are indeed beyond my power to describe: I shall not therefore attempt it. After Allworthy had raised Jones from his feet, where he had prostrated himself, and received him into his arms, "O my child!" he cried, "how have I been to blame! how have I injured you! What amends can I ever make you for those unkind, those unjust suspicions which I have entertained, and for all the sufferings they have occasioned to you?" "Am I not now made amends?" cries Jones. "Would not my sufferings, if they had been ten times greater, have been now richly repaid? O my dear uncle, this goodness, this tenderness overpowers, unmans, destroys me. I cannot bear the transports which flow so fast upon me. To be again restored to your presence, to your favour; to be once more thus kindly received by my great, my noble, my generous benefactor."—"Indeed, child," cries Allworthy, "I have used you cruelly."——He then explained to him all the treachery of Blifil, and again repeated expressions of the utmost concern, for having been induced by that treachery to use him so ill. "O, talk not so!" answered Jones; "indeed, sir, you have

used me nobly. The wisest man might be deceived as you were; and, under such a deception, the best must have acted just as you did. Your goodness displayed itself in the midst of your anger, just as it then seemed. I owe everything to that goodness, of which I have been most unworthy. Do not put me on self-accusation, by carrying your generous sentiments too far. Alas! sir, I have not been punished more than I have deserved; and it shall be the whole business of my future life to deserve that happiness you now bestow on me; for, believe me, my dear uncle, my punishment hath not been thrown away upon me: though I have been a great, I am not a hardened sinner; I thank Heaven, I have had time to reflect on my past life, where, though I cannot charge myself with any gross villany, yet I can discern follies and vices more than enough to repent and to be ashamed of; follies which have been attended with dreadful consequences to myself, and have brought me to the brink of destruction." "I am rejoiced, my dear child," answered Allworthy, "to hear you talk thus sensibly; for as I am convinced hypocrisy (good Heaven! how have I been imposed on by it in others!) was never among your faults, so I can readily believe all you say. You now see, Tom, to what dangers imprudence alone may subject virtue (for virtue, I am now convinced, you love in a great degree). Prudence is indeed the duty which we owe to ourselves; and if we will be so much our own enemies as to neglect it, we are not to wonder if the world is deficient in discharging their duty to us; for when a man lays the foundation of his own ruin, others will, I am afraid, be too apt to build upon it. You say, however, you have seen your errors, and will reform them. I firmly believe you, my dear child; and therefore, from this moment, you shall never be reminded of them by me.

Remember them only yourself so far as for the future to teach you the better to avoid them; but still remember, for your comfort, that there is this great difference between those faults which candor may construe into imprudence, and those which can be deduced from villany only. The former, perhaps, are even more apt to subject a man to ruin; but if he reform, his character will, at length, be totally retrieved; the world, though not immediately, will in time be reconciled to him; and he may reflect, not without some mixture of pleasure, on the dangers he hath escaped; but villany, my boy, when once discovered is irretrievable; the stains which this leaves behind, no time will wash away. The censures of mankind will pursue the wretch, their scorn will abash him in publick; and if shame drives him into retirement, he will go to it with all those terrors with which a weary child, who is afraid of hobgoblins, retreats from company to go to bed alone. Here his murdered conscience will haunt him.—Repose, like a false friend, will fly from him. Wherever he turns his eyes, horror presents itself; if he looks backward, unavailable repentance treads on his heels; if forward, incurable despair stares him in the face, till, like a condemned prisoner confined in a dungeon, he detests his present condition, and yet dreads the consequence of that hour which is to relieve him from it. Comfort yourself, I say, my child, that this is not your case; and rejoice with thankfulness to him who hath suffered you to see your errors, before they have brought on you that destruction to which a persistance in even those errors must have led you. You have deserted them; and the prospect now before you is such, that happiness seems in your own power." At these words Jones fetched a deep sigh; upon which, when Allworthy remonstrated, he said, "Sir, I will conceal

nothing from you: I fear there is one consequence of my vices I shall never be able to retrieve. O, my dear uncle! I have lost a treasure." "You need say no more," answered Allworthy; "I will be explicit with you; I know what you lament; I have seen the young lady, and have discoursed with her concerning you. This I must insist on, as an earnest of your sincerity in all you have said, and of the stedfastness of your resolution, that you obey me in one instance. To abide intirely by the determination of the young lady, whether it shall be in your favour or no. She hath already suffered enough from solicitations which I hate to think of; she shall owe no further constraint to my family: I know her father will be as ready to torment her now on your account as he hath formerly been on another's; but I am determined she shall suffer no more confinement, no more violence, no more uneasy hours." "O, my dear uncle!" answered Jones, "lay, I beseech you, some command on me, in which I shall have some merit in obedience. Believe me, sir, the only instance in which I could disobey you would be to give an uneasy moment to my Sophia. No, sir, if I am so miserable to have incurred her displeasure beyond all hope of forgiveness, that alone, with the dreadful reflection of causing her misery, will be sufficient to overpower me. To call Sophia mine is the greatest, and now the only additional blessing which heaven can bestow; but it is a blessing which I must owe to her alone." "I will not flatter you, child," cries Allworthy; "I fear your case is desperate: I never saw stronger marks of an unalterable resolution in any person than appeared in her vehement declarations against receiving your addresses; for which, perhaps, you can account better than myself." "Oh, sir! I can account too well," answered Jones; "I have sinned against her beyond all hope of pardon; and

guilty as I am, my guilt unfortunately appears to her in ten times blacker than the real colours. O, my dear uncle! I find my follies are irretrievable; and all your goodness cannot save me from perdition."

A servant now acquainted them that Mr Western was below-stairs; for his eagerness to see Jones could not wait till the afternoon. Upon which Jones, whose eyes were full of tears, begged his uncle to entertain Western a few minutes, till he a little recovered himself; to which the good man consented, and, having ordered Mr Western to be shewn into a parlour, went down to him.

Mrs Miller no sooner heard that Jones was alone (for she had not yet seen him since his release from prison) than she came eagerly into the room, and, advancing towards Jones, wished him heartily joy of his new-found uncle and his happy reconciliation; adding, "I wish I could give you joy on another account, my dear child; but anything so inexorable I never saw."

Jones, with some appearance of surprize, asked her what she meant. "Why then," says she, "I have been with your young lady, and have explained all matters to her, as they were told to me by my son Nightingale. She can have no longer any doubt about the letter; of that I am certain; for I told her my son Nightingale was ready to take his oath, if she pleased, that it was all his own invention, and the letter of his inditing. I told her the very reason of sending the letter ought to recommend you to her the more, as it was all upon her account, and a plain proof that you was resolved to quit all your profligacy for the future; that you had never been guilty of a single instance of infidelity to her since your seeing her in town: I am afraid I went too far there; but Heaven forgive me! I hope your future behaviour will be my justification.

I am sure I have said all I can; but all to no purpose. She remains inflexible. She says, she had forgiven many faults on account of youth; but expressed such detestation of the character of a libertine, that she absolutely silenced me. I often attempted to excuse you; but the justness of her accusation flew in my face. Upon my honour, she is a lovely woman, and one of the sweetest and most sensible creatures I ever saw. I could have almost kissed her for one expression she made use of. It was a sentiment worthy of Seneca, or of a bishop. 'I once fancied, madam,' said she, 'I had discovered great goodness of heart in Mr Jones; and for that I own I had a sincere esteem; but an entire profligacy of manners will corrupt the best heart in the world; and all which a good-natured libertine can expect is, that we should mix some grains of pity with our contempt and abhorrence.' She is an angelic creature, that is the truth on't." "O, Mrs Miller!" answered Jones, "can I bear to think I have lost such an angel?" "Lost! no," cries Mrs Miller; "I hope you have not lost her yet. Resolve to leave such vicious courses, and you may yet have hopes; nay, if she should remain inexorable, there is another young lady, a sweet pretty young lady, and a swinging fortune, who is absolutely dying for love of you. I heard of it this very morning, and I told it to Miss Western; nay, I went a little beyond the truth again; for I told her you had refused her; but indeed I knew you would refuse her. And here I must give you a little comfort; when I mentioned the young lady's name, who is no other than the pretty widow Hunt, I thought she turned pale; but when I said you had refused her, I will be sworn her face was all over scarlet in an instant; and these were her very words: 'I will not deny but that I believe he has some affection for me.'"

Here the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Western, who could no longer be kept out of the room even by the authority of Allworthy himself; though this, as we have often seen, had a wonderful power over him.

Western immediately went up to Jones, crying out, "My old friend Tom, I am glad to see thee with all my heart! all past must be forgotten; I could not intend any affront to thee, because, as Allworthy here knows, nay, dost know it thyself, I took thee for another person; and where a body means no harm, what signifies a hasty word or two? One Christian must forget and forgive another." "I hope, sir," said Jones, "I shall never forget the many obligations I have had to you; but as for any offence towards me, I declare I am an utter stranger." "A't," says Western, "then give me thy fist; a't as hearty an honest cock as any in the kingdom. Come along with me; I'll carry thee to thy mistress this moment." Here Allworthy interposed; and the squire being unable to prevail either with the uncle or nephew, was, after some litigation, obliged to consent to delay introducing Jones to Sophia till the afternoon; at which time Allworthy, as well in compassion to Jones as in compliance with the eager desires of Western, was prevailed upon to promise to attend at the tea-table.

The conversation which now ensued was pleasant enough; and with which, had it happened earlier in our history, we would have entertained our reader; but as we have now leisure only to attend to what is very material, it shall suffice to say that matters being entirely adjusted as to the afternoon visit Mr Western again returned home.

Chapter vi.

The history draws nearer to a conclusion.

WHEN Mr Western was departed, Jones began to inform Mr Allworthy and Mrs Miller that his liberty had been procured by two noble lords, who, together with two surgeons and a friend of Mr Nightingale's, had attended the magistrate by whom he had been committed, and by whom, on the surgeons' oaths, that the wounded person was out of all manner of danger from his wound, he was discharged.

One only of these lords, he said, he had ever seen before, and that no more than once; but the other had greatly surprized him by asking his pardon for an offence he had been guilty of towards him, occasioned, he said, entirely by his ignorance who he was.

Now the reality of the case, with which Jones was not acquainted till afterwards, was this:—The lieutenant whom Lord Fellamar had employed, according to the advice of Lady Bellaston, to press Jones as a vagabond into the sea-service, when he came to report to his lordship the event which we have before seen, spoke very favourably of the behaviour of Mr Jones on all accounts, and strongly assured that lord that he must have mistaken the person, for that Jones was certainly a gentleman; insomuch that his lordship, who was strictly a man of honour, and would by no means have been guilty of an action which the world in general would have condemned, began to be much concerned for the advice which he had taken.

Within a day or two after this, Lord Fellamar happened to dine with the Irish peer, who, in a conversation upon the duel, acquainted his company with the character of Fitzpatrick; to which, indeed, he did not

do strict justice, especially in what related to his lady. He said she was the most innocent, the most injured woman alive, and that from compassion alone he had undertaken her cause. He then declared an intention of going the next morning to Fitzpatrick's lodgings, in order to prevail with him, if possible, to consent to a separation from his wife, who, the peer said, was in apprehensions for her life, if she should ever return to be under the power of her husband. Lord Fellamar agreed to go with him, that he might satisfy himself more concerning Jones and the circumstances of the duel; for he was by no means easy concerning the part he had acted. The moment his lordship gave a hint of his readiness to assist in the delivery of the lady, it was eagerly embraced by the other nobleman, who depended much on the authority of Lord Fellamar, as he thought it would greatly contribute to awe Fitzpatrick into a compliance; and perhaps he was in the right; for the poor Irishman no sooner saw these noble peers had undertaken the cause of his wife than he submitted, and articles of separation were soon drawn up and signed between the parties.

Fitzpatrick, who had been so well satisfied by Mrs Waters concerning the innocence of his wife with Jones at Upton, or perhaps, from some other reasons, was now become so indifferent to that matter, that he spoke highly in favour of Jones to Lord Fellamar, took all the blame upon himself, and said the other had behaved very much like a gentleman and a man of honour; and upon that lord's further enquiry concerning Mr Jones, Fitzpatrick told him he was nephew to a gentleman of very great fashion and fortune, which was the account he had just received from Mrs Waters after her interview with Dowling.

Lord Fellamar now thought it behoved him to do everything in his power to make satisfaction to a gentle-

man whom he had so grossly injured, and without any consideration of rivalship (for he had now given over all thoughts of Sophia), determined to procure Mr Jones's liberty, being satisfied, as well from Fitzpatrick as his surgeon, that the wound was not mortal. He therefore prevailed with the Irish peer to accompany him to the place where Jones was confined, to whom he behaved as we have already related.

When Allworthy returned to his lodgings, he immediately carried Jones into his room, and then acquainted him with the whole matter, as well what he had heard from Mrs Waters as what he had discovered from Mr Dowling.

Jones expressed great astonishment and no less concern at this account, but without making any comment or observation upon it. And now a message was brought from Mr Blifil, desiring to know if his uncle was at leisure that he might wait upon him. Allworthy started and turned pale, and then in a more passionate tone than I believe he had ever used before, bid the servant tell Blifil he knew him not. "Consider, dear sir," cries Jones, in a trembling voice. "I have considered," answered Allworthy, "and you yourself shall carry my message to the villain. No one can carry him the sentence of his own ruin so properly as the man whose ruin he hath so villanously contrived." "Pardon me, dear sir," said Jones; "a moment's reflection will, I am sure, convince you of the contrary. What might perhaps be but justice from another tongue, would from mine be insult; and to whom?—my own brother and your nephew. Nor did he use me so barbarously—indeed, that would have been more inexcusable than anything he hath done. Fortune may tempt men of no very bad dispositions to injustice; but insults proceed only from black and rancorous minds, and have no temptations to excuse them. Let me beseech

you, sir, to do nothing by him in the present height of your anger. Consider, my dear uncle, I was not myself condemned unheard." Allworthy stood silent a moment, and then, embracing Jones, he said, with tears gushing from his eyes, "O my child! to what goodness have I been so long blind!"

Mrs Miller entering the room at that moment, after a gentle rap which was not perceived, and seeing Jones in the arms of his uncle, the poor woman in an agony of joy fell upon her knees, and burst forth into the most ecstatic thanksgivings to heaven for what had happened; then, running to Jones, she embraced him eagerly, crying, "My dearest friend, I wish you joy a thousand and a thousand times of this blest day." And next Mr Allworthy himself received the same congratulations. To which he answered, "Indeed, indeed, Mrs Miller, I am beyond expression happy." Some few more raptures having passed on all sides, Mrs Miller desired them both to walk down to dinner in the parlour, where she said there were a very happy set of people assembled—being indeed no other than Mr Nightingale and his bride, and his cousin Harriet with her bridegroom.

Allworthy excused himself from dining with the company, saying he had ordered some little thing for him and his nephew in his own apartment, for that they had much private business to discourse of; but would not resist promising the good woman that both he and Jones would make part of her society at supper.

Mrs Miller then asked what was to be done with Blifil? "for indeed," says she, "I cannot be easy while such a villain is in my house."—Allworthy answered, "He was as uneasy as herself on the same account." "Oh!" cries she, "if that be the case, leave the matter to me, I'll soon show him the outside out of my doors, I warrant you. Here are two or

three lusty fellows below-stairs." "There will be no need of any violence," cries Allworthy; "if you will carry him a message from me, he will, I am convinced, depart of his own accord." "Will I?" said Mrs Miller; "I never did anything in my life with a better will." Here Jones interfered, and said, "He had considered the matter better, and would, if Mr Allworthy pleased, be himself the messenger. I know," says he, "already enough of your pleasure, sir, and I beg leave to acquaint him with it by my own words. Let me beseech you, sir," added he, "to reflect on the dreadful consequences of driving him to violent and sudden despair. How unfit, alas! is this poor man to die in his present situation." This suggestion had not the least effect on Mrs Miller. She left the room, crying, "You are too good, Mr Jones, infinitely too good to live in this world." But it made a deeper impression on Allworthy. "My good child," said he, "I am equally astonished at the goodness of your heart, and the quickness of your understanding. Heaven indeed forbid that this wretch should be deprived of any means or time for repentance! That would be a shocking consideration indeed. Go to him, therefore, and use your own discretion; yet do not flatter him with any hopes of my forgiveness; for I shall never forgive villany farther than my religion obliges me, and that extends not either to our bounty or our conversation."

Jones went up to Blifil's room, whom he found in a situation which moved his pity, though it would have raised a less amiable passion in many beholders. He cast himself on his bed, where he lay abandoning himself to despair, and drowned in tears; not in such tears as flow from contrition, and wash away guilt from minds which have been seduced or surprized into it unawares, against the bent of their natural dispositions, as

will sometimes happen from human frailty, even to the good; no, these tears were such as the frighted thief sheds in his cart, and are indeed the effects of that concern which the most savage natures are seldom deficient in feeling for themselves.

It would be unpleasant and tedious to paint this scene in full length. Let it suffice to say, that the behaviour of Jones was kind to excess. He omitted nothing which his invention could supply, to raise and comfort the drooping spirits of Blifil, before he communicated to him the resolution of his uncle that he must quit the house that evening. He offered to furnish him with any money he wanted, assured him of his hearty forgiveness of all he had done against him, that he would endeavour to live with him hereafter as a brother, and would leave nothing unattempted to effectuate a reconciliation with his uncle.

Blifil was at first sullen and silent, balancing in his mind whether he should yet deny all; but, finding at last the evidence too strong against him, he betook himself at last to confession. He then asked pardon of his brother in the most vehement manner, prostrated himself on the ground, and kissed his feet; in short he was now as remarkably mean as he had been before remarkably wicked.

Jones could not so far check his disdain, but that it a little discovered itself in his countenance at this extreme servility. He raised his brother the moment he could from the ground, and advised him to bear his afflictions more like a man; repeating, at the same time, his promises, that he would do all in his power to lessen them; for which Blifil, making many professions of his unworthiness, poured forth a profusion of thanks; and then, he having declared he would immediately depart to another lodging, Jones returned to his uncle.

Among other matters, Allworthy now acquainted Jones with the discovery which he had made concerning the £500 bank-notes. "I have," said he, "already consulted a lawyer, who tells me, to my great astonishment, that there is no punishment for a fraud of this kind. Indeed, when I consider the black ingratitude of this fellow toward you, I think a highwayman, compared to him, is an innocent person."

"Good Heaven!" says Jones, "is it possible?—I am shocked beyond measure at this news. I thought there was not an honester fellow in the world.—— The temptation of such a sum was too great for him to withstand; for smaller matters have come safe to me through his hand. Indeed, my dear uncle, you must suffer me to call it weakness rather than ingratitude; for I am convinced the poor fellow loves me, and hath done me some kindnesses, which I can never forget; nay, I believe he hath repented of this very act; for it is not above a day or two ago, when my affairs seemed in the most desperate situation, that he visited me in my confinement, and offered me any money I wanted. Consider, sir, what a temptation to a man who hath tasted such bitter distress, it must be, to have a sum in his possession which must put him and his family beyond any future possiiblity of suffering the like."

"Child," cries Allworthy, "you carry this forgiving temper too far. Such mistaken mercy is not only weakness, but borders on injustice, and is very pernicious to society, as it encourages vice. The dishonesty of this fellow I might, perhaps, have pardoned, but never his ingratitude. And give me leave to say, when we suffer any temptation to atone for dishonesty itself, we are as candid and merciful as we ought to be; and so far I confess I have gone; for I have often pitied the fate of a highwayman, when I have been on the grand jury; and have more than once applied to

much that a stranger of moderate sagacity might have well concluded they were mutually indifferent; but so it was, however strange it may seem; both sat with their eyes cast downwards on the ground, and for some minutes continued in perfect silence.

Mr Jones during this interval attempted once or twice to speak, but was absolutely incapable, muttering only, or rather sighing out, some broken words; when Sophia at length, partly out of pity to him, and partly to turn the discourse from the subject which she knew well enough he was endeavouring to open, said—

"Sure, sir, you are the most fortunate man in the world in this discovery." "And can you really, madam, think me so fortunate," said Jones, sighing, "while I have incurred your displeasure?"—"Nay, sir," says she, "as to that you best know whether you have deserved it." "Indeed, madam," answered he, "you yourself are as well apprized of all my demerits. Mrs Miller hath acquainted you with the whole truth. O! my Sophia, am I never to hope for forgiveness?" —"I think, Mr Jones," said she, "I may almost depend on your own justice, and leave it to yourself to pass sentence on your own conduct."—"Alas! madam," answered he, "it is mercy, and not justice, which I implore at your hands. Justice I know must condemn me.—Yet not for the letter I sent to Lady Bellaston. Of that I most solemnly declare you have had a true account." He then insisted much on the security given him by Nightingale of a fair pretence for breaking off, if, contrary to their expectations, her ladyship should have accepted his offer; but confest that he had been guilty of a great indiscretion to put such a letter as that into her power, "which," said he, "I have dearly paid for, in the effect it has upon you." "I do not, I cannot," says she, "believe otherwise of that letter than you would have me. My conduct, I

think, shews you clearly I do not believe there is much in that. And yet, Mr Jones, have I not enough to resent? After what past at Upton, so soon to engage in a new amour with another woman, while I fancied, and you pretended, your heart was bleeding for me? Indeed, you have acted strangely. Can I believe the passion you have profest to me to be sincere? Or, if I can, what happiness can I assure myself of with a man capable of so much inconstancy?" "O! my Sophia," cries he, "do not doubt the sincerity of the purest passion that ever inflamed a human breast. Think, most adorable creature, of my unhappy situation, of my despair. Could I, my Sophia, have flattered myself with the most distant hopes of being ever permitted to throw myself at your feet in the manner I do now, it would not have been in the power of any other woman to have inspired a thought which the severest chastity could have condemned. Inconstancy to you! O Sophia! if you can have goodness enough to pardon what is past, do not let any cruel future apprehensions shut your mercy against me. No repentance was ever more sincere. O! let it reconcile me to my heaven in this dear bosom." "Sincere repentance, Mr Jones," answered she, "will obtain the pardon of a sinner, but it is from one who is a perfect judge of that sincerity. A human mind may be imposed on; nor is there any infallible method to prevent it. You must expect, however, that if I can be prevailed on by your repentance to pardon you, I will at least insist on the strongest proof of its sincerity." "Name any proof in my power," answered Jones eagerly. "Time," replied she; "time alone, Mr Jones, can convince me that you are a true penitent, and have resolved to abandon these vicious courses, which I should detest you for, if I imagined you capable of persevering in them." "Do not imagine it," cries Jones. "On my knees I intreat,

I implore your confidence, a confidence which it shall be the business of my life to deserve." "Let it then," said she, "be the business of some part of your life to shew me you deserve it. I think I have been explicit enough in assuring you, that, when I see you merit my confidence, you will obtain it. After what is past, sir, can you expect I should take you upon your word?"

He replied, "Don't believe me upon my word; I have a better security, a pledge for my constancy, which it is impossible to see and to doubt." "What is that?" said Sophia, a little surprized. "I will show you, my charming angel," cried Jones, seizing her hand and carrying her to the glass. "There, behold it there in that lovely figure, in that face, that shape, those eyes, that mind which shines through these eyes; can the man who shall be in possession of these be inconstant? Impossible! my Sophia; they would fix a Dorimant, a Lord Rochester. You could not doubt it, if you could see yourself with any eyes but your own." Sophia blushed and half smiled; but, forcing again her brow into a frown—"If I am to judge," said she, "of the future by the past, my image will no more remain in your heart when I am out of your sight, than it will in this glass when I am out of the room." "By heaven, by all that is sacred!" said Jones, "it never was out of my heart. The delicacy of your sex cannot conceive the grossness of ours, nor how little one sort of amour has to do with the heart." "I will never marry a man," replied Sophia, very gravely, "who shall not learn refinement enough to be as incapable as I am myself of making such a distinction." "I will learn it," said Jones. "I have learnt it already. The first moment of hope that my Sophia might be my wife taught it me at once; and all the rest of her sex from that moment became as little the objects of desire to my sense as of passion to my

heart." "Well," says Sophia, "the proof of this must be from time. Your situation, Mr Jones, is now altered, and I assure you I have great satisfaction in the alteration. You will now want no opportunity of being near me, and convincing me that your mind is altered too." "O! my angel," cries Jones, "how shall I thank thy goodness! And are you so good to own that you have a satisfaction in my prosperity?—— Believe me, believe me, madam, it is you alone have given a relish to that prosperity, since I owe to it the dear hope——O! my Sophia, let it not be a distant one.—I will be all obedience to your commands. I will not dare to press anything further than you permit me. Yet let me intreat you to appoint a short trial. O! tell me when I may expect you will be convinced of what is most solemnly true." "When I have gone voluntarily thus far, Mr Jones," said she, "I expect not to be pressed. Nay, I will not."—"O! don't look unkindly thus, my Sophia," cries he. "I do not, I dare not press you.—Yet permit me at least once more to beg you would fix the period. O! consider the impatience of love."——"A twelvemonth, perhaps," said she. "O! my Sophia," cries he, "you have named an eternity."—"Perhaps it may be something sooner," says she; "I will not be teazed. If your passion for me be what I would have it, I think you may now be easy."—"Easy! Sophia, call not such an exulting happiness as mine by so cold a name.—— O! transporting thought! am I not assured that the blessed day will come, when I shall call you mine; when fears shall be no more; when I shall have that dear, that vast, that exquisite, ecstatic delight of making my Sophia happy?"——"Indeed, sir," said she, "that day is in your own power."——"O! my dear, my divine angel," cried he, "these words have made me mad with joy.——But I must, I will thank those

dear lips which have so sweetly pronounced my bliss." He then caught her in his arms, and kissed her with an ardour he had never ventured before.

At this instant Western, who had stood some time listening, burst into the room, and, with his hunting voice and phrase, cried out, "To her, boy, to her, go to her.——That's it, little honeys, O that's it! Well! what, is it all over? Hath she appointed the day, boy? What, shall it be to-morrow or next day? It shan't be put off a minute longer than next day, I am resolved." "Let me beseech you, sir," says Jones, "don't let me be the occasion"——"Beseech mine a——," cries Western. "I thought thou hadst been a lad of higher mettle than to give way to a parcel of maidenish tricks. ——I tell thee 'tis all flimflam. Zoodikers! she'd have the wedding to-night with all her heart. Would'st not, Sophy? Come, confess, and be an honest girl for once. What, art dumb? Why dost not speak?" "Why should I confess, sir," says Sophia, "since it seems you are so well acquainted with my thoughts?" ——"That's a good girl," cries he, "and dost consent then?" "No, indeed, sir," says Sophia, "I have given no such consent."——"And wunt not ha un then to-morrow, nor next day?" says Western.—— "Indeed, sir," says she, "I have no such intention." "But I can tell thee," replied he, "why hast nut; only because thou dost love to be disobedient, and to plague and vex thy father." "Pray, sir," said Jones, interfering——"I tell thee thou art a puppy," cries he. "When I vorbid her, then it was all nothing but sighing and whining, and languishing and writing; now I am vor thee, she is against thee. All the spirit of contrary, that's all. She is above being guided and governed by her father, that is the whole truth on't. It is only to disoblige and contradict me." "What would my papa have me do?" cries Sophia. "What

would I ha thee do?" says he, "why, gi' un thy hand this moment."——"Well, sir," says Sophia, "I will obey you.—There is my hand, Mr Jones." "Well, and will you consent to ha un to-morrow morning?" says Western.——"I will be obedient to you, sir," cries she.——"Why then to-morrow morning be the day," cries he. "Why then to-morrow morning shall be the day, papa, since you will have it so," says Sophia. Jones then fell upon his knees, and kissed her hand in an agony of joy, while Western began to caper and dance about the room, presently crying out—"Where the devil is Allworthy? He is without now, a talking with that d——d lawyer Dowling, when he should be minding other matters." He then sallied out in quest of him, and very opportunely left the lovers to enjoy a few tender minutes alone.

But he soon returned with Allworthy, saying, "If you won't believe me, you may ask her yourself. Hast nut gin thy consent, Sophy, to be married to-morrow?" "Such are your commands, sir," cries Sophia, "and I dare not be guilty of disobedience." "I hope, madam," cries Allworthy, "my nephew will merit so much goodness, and will be always as sensible as myself of the great honour you have done my family. An alliance with so charming and so excellent a young lady would indeed be an honour to the greatest in England." "Yes," cries Western, "but if I had suffered her to stand shill I shall I, dilly dally, you might not have had that honour yet a while; I was forced to use a little fatherly authority to bring her to." "I hope not, sir," cries Allworthy, "I hope there is not the least constraint." "Why, there," cries Western, "you may bid her unsay all again if you will. Dost repent heartily of thy promise, dost not, Sophia?" "Indeed, papa," cries she, "I do not repent, nor do I believe I ever shall, of any

promise in favour of Mr Jones." "Then, nephew," cries Allworthy, "I felicitate you most heartily; for I think you are the happiest of men. And, madam, you will give me leave to congratulate you on this joyful occasion: indeed, I am convinced you have bestowed yourself on one who will be sensible of your great merit, and who will at least use his best endeavours to deserve it." "His best endeavours!" cries Western, "that he will, I warrant un.——Harkee, Allworthy, I'll bet thee five pounds to a crown we have a boy to-morrow nine months; but prithee tell me what wut ha! Wut ha Burgundy, Champaigne, or what? for, please Jupiter, we'll make a night on't." "Indeed, sir," said Allworthy, "you must excuse me; both my nephew and I were engaged before I suspected this near approach of his happiness."—"Engaged!" quoth the squire, "never tell me.—I won't part with thee to-night upon any occasion. Shalt sup here, please the lord Harry." "You must pardon me, my dear neighbour!" answered Allworthy; "I have given a solemn promise, and that you know I never break." "Why, prithee, who art engaged to?" cries the squire.——Allworthy then informed him, as likewise of the company.——"Odzookers!" answered the squire, "I will go with thee, and so shall Sophy! for I won't part with thee to-night; and it would be barbarous to part Tom and the girl." This offer was presently embraced by Allworthy, and Sophia consented, having first obtained a private promise from her father that he would not mention a syllable concerning her marriage.

Chapter the last.

In which the history is concluded.

YOUNG Nightingale had been that afternoon, by appointment, to wait on his father, who received him much more kindly than he expected. There likewise he met his uncle, who was returned to town in quest of his new-married daughter.

This marriage was the luckiest incident which could have happened to the young gentleman; for these brothers lived in a constant state of contention about the government of their children, both heartily despising the method which each other took. Each of them therefore now endeavoured, as much as he could, to palliate the offence which his own child had committed, and to aggravate the match of the other. This desire of triumphing over his brother, added to the many arguments which Allworthy had used, so strongly operated on the old gentleman that he met his son with a smiling countenance, and actually agreed to sup with him that evening at Mrs Miller's.

As for the other, who really loved his daughter with the most immoderate affection, there was little difficulty in inclining him to a reconciliation. He was no sooner informed by his nephew where his daughter and her husband were, than he declared he would instantly go to her. And when he arrived there he scarce suffered her to fall upon her knees before he took her up, and embraced her with a tenderness which affected all who saw him; and in less than a quarter of an hour was as well reconciled to both her and her husband as if he had himself joined their hands.

In this situation were affairs when Mr Allworthy and his company arrived to complete the happiness of Mrs Miller, who no sooner saw Sophia than she guessed

everything that had happened; and so great was her friendship to Jones, that it added not a few transports to those she felt on the happiness of her own daughter.

There have not, I believe, been many instances of a number of people met together, where every one was so perfectly happy as in this company. Amongst whom the father of young Nightingale enjoyed the least perfect content; for, notwithstanding his affection for his son, notwithstanding the authority and the arguments of Allworthy, together with the other motive mentioned before, he could not so entirely be satisfied with his son's choice; and, perhaps, the presence of Sophia herself tended a little to aggravate and heighten his concern, as a thought now and then suggested itself that his son might have had that lady, or some other such. Not that any of the charms which adorned either the person or mind of Sophia created the uneasiness; it was the contents of her father's coffers which set his heart a longing. These were the charms which he could not bear to think his son had sacrificed to the daughter of Mrs Miller.

The brides were both very pretty women; but so totally were they eclipsed by the beauty of Sophia, that, had they not been two of the best-tempered girls in the world, it would have raised some envy in their breasts; for neither of their husbands could long keep his eyes from Sophia, who sat at the table like a queen receiving homage, or, rather, like a superior being receiving adoration from all around her. But it was an adoration which they gave, not which she exacted; for she was as much distinguished by her modesty and affability as by all her other perfections.

The evening was spent in much true mirth. All were happy, but those the most who had been most unhappy before. Their former sufferings and fears gave such a relish to their felicity as even love and

fortune, in their fullest flow, could not have given without the advantage of such a comparison. Yet, as great joy, especially after a sudden change and revolution of circumstances, is apt to be silent, and dwells rather in the heart than on the tongue, Jones and Sophia appeared the least merry of the whole company; which Western observed with great impatience, often crying out to them, "Why dost not talk, boy? Why dost look so grave? Hast lost thy tongue, girl? Drink another glass of wine; sha't drink another glass." And, the more to enliven her, he would sometimes sing a merry song, which bore some relation to matrimony and the loss of a maidenhead. Nay, he would have proceeded so far on that topic as to have driven her out of the room, if Mr Allworthy had not checkt him, sometimes by looks, and once or twice by a "Fie! Mr Western!" He began, indeed, once to debate the matter, and assert his right to talk to his own daughter as he thought fit; but, as nobody seconded him, he was soon reduced to order.

Notwithstanding this little restraint, he was so pleased with the chearfulness and good-humour of the company, that he insisted on their meeting the next day at his lodgings. They all did so; and the lovely Sophia, who was now in private become a bride too, officiated as the mistress of the ceremonies, or, in the polite phrase, did the honours of the table. She had that morning given her hand to Jones, in the chapel at Doctors'-Commons, where Mr Allworthy, Mr Western, and Mrs Miller, were the only persons present.

Sophia had earnestly desired her father that no others of the company, who were that day to dine with him, should be acquainted with her marriage. The same secrecy was enjoined to Mrs Miller, and Jones undertook for Allworthy. This somewhat reconciled the delicacy of Sophia to the public enter-

tainment which, in compliance with her father's will, she was obliged to go to, greatly against her own inclinations. In confidence of this secrecy she went through the day pretty well, till the squire, who was now advanced into the second bottle, could contain his joy no longer, but, filling out a bumper, drank a health to the bride. The health was immediately pledged by all present, to the great confusion of our poor blushing Sophia, and the great concern of Jones upon her account. To say truth, there was not a person present made wiser by this discovery; for Mrs Miller had whispered it to her daughter, her daughter to her husband, her husband to his sister, and she to all the rest.

Sophia now took the first opportunity of withdrawing with the ladies, and the squire sat in to his cups, in which he was, by degrees, deserted by all the company except the uncle of young Nightingale, who loved his bottle as well as Western himself. These two, therefore, sat stoutly to it during the whole evening, and long after that happy hour which had surrendered the charming Sophia to the eager arms of her enraptured Jones.

Thus, reader, we have at length brought our history to a conclusion, in which, to our great pleasure, though contrary, perhaps, to thy expectation, Mr Jones appears to be the happiest of all humankind; for what happiness this world affords equal to the possession of such a woman as Sophia, I sincerely own I have never yet discovered.

As to the other persons who have made any considerable figure in this history, as some may desire to know a little more concerning them, we will proceed, in as few words as possible, to satisfy their curiosity.

Allworthy hath never yet been prevailed upon to see Blifil, but he hath yielded to the importunity of Jones, backed by Sophia, to settle £200 a-year upon him; to which Jones hath privately added a third.

Upon this income he lives in one of the northern counties, about 200 miles distant from London, and lays up £200 a-year out of it, in order to purchase a seat in the next parliament from a neighbouring borough, which he has bargained for with an attorney there. He is also lately turned Methodist, in hopes of marrying a very rich widow of that sect, whose estate lies in that part of the kingdom.

Square died soon after he writ the before-mentioned letter; and as to Thwackum, he continues at his vicarage. He hath made many fruitless attempts to regain the confidence of Allworthy, or to ingratiate himself with Jones, both of whom he flatters to their faces, and abuses behind their backs. But in his stead, Mr Allworthy hath lately taken Mr Abraham Adams into his house, of whom Sophia is grown immoderately fond, and declares he shall have the tuition of her children.

Mrs Fitzpatrick is separated from her husband, and retains the little remains of her fortune. She lives in reputation at the polite end of the town, and is so good an economist, that she spends three times the income of her fortune, without running in debt. She maintains a perfect intimacy with the lady of the Irish peer; and in acts of friendship to her repays all the obligations she owes to her husband.

Mrs Western was soon reconciled to her niece Sophia, and hath spent two months together with her in the country. Lady Bellaston made the latter a formal visit at her return to town, where she behaved to Jones as to a perfect stranger, and, with great civility, wished him joy on his marriage.

Mr Nightingale hath purchased an estate for his son in the neighbourhood of Jones, where the young gentleman, his lady, Mrs Miller, and her little daughter reside, and the most agreeable intercourse subsists between the two families.

As to those of lower account, Mrs Waters returned into the country, had a pension of £60 a-year settled upon her by Mr Allworthy, and is married to Parson Supple, on whom, at the instance of Sophia, Western hath bestowed a considerable living.

Black George, hearing the discovery that had been made, ran away, and was never since heard of; and Jones bestowed the money on his family, but not in equal proportions, for Molly had much the greatest share.

As for Partridge, Jones hath settled £50 a-year on him; and he hath again set up a school, in which he meets with much better encouragement than formerly, and there is now a treaty of marriage on foot between him and Miss Molly Seagrim, which, through the mediation of Sophia, is likely to take effect.

We now return to take leave of Mr Jones and Sophia, who, within two days after their marriage, attended Mr Western and Mr Allworthy into the country. Western hath resigned his family seat, and the greater part of his estate, to his son-in-law, and hath retired to a lesser house of his in another part of the country, which is better for hunting. Indeed, he is often as a visitant with Mr Jones, who, as well as his daughter, hath an infinite delight in doing everything in their power to please him. And this desire of theirs is attended with such success, that the old gentleman declares he was never happy in his life till now. He hath here a parlour and ante-chamber to himself, where he gets drunk with whom he pleases: and his daughter is still as ready as formerly to play to him whenever he desires it; for Jones hath assured her that, as, next to pleasing her, one of his highest satisfactions is to contribute to the happiness of the old man; so, the great duty which she expresses and performs to her father, renders her almost equally dear to him with the love which she bestows on himself.

Sophia hath already produced him two fine children, a boy and a girl, of whom the old gentleman is so fond, that he spends much of his time in the nursery, where he declares the tattling of his little grand-daughter, who is above a year and a half old, is sweeter music than the finest cry of dogs in England.

Allworthy was likewise greatly liberal to Jones on the marriage, and hath omitted no instance of shewing his affection to him and his lady, who love him as a father. Whatever in the nature of Jones had a tendency to vice, has been corrected by continual conversation with this good man, and by his union with the lovely and virtuous Sophia. He hath also, by reflection on his past follies, acquired a discretion and prudence very uncommon in one of his lively parts.

To conclude, as there are not to be found a worthier man and woman, than this fond couple, so neither can any be imagined more happy. They preserve the purest and tenderest affection for each other, an affection daily encreased and confirmed by mutual endearments and mutual esteem. Nor is their conduct towards their relations and friends less amiable than towards one another. And such is their condescension, their indulgence, and their beneficence to those below them, that there is not a neighbour, a tenant, or a servant, who doth not most gratefully bless the day when Mr Jones was married to his Sophia.

THE END.

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